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MY SLAV FRIENDS

ROTHAY REYNOLDS

GIFT OF
JEROME B. LANDFIELD

Najświętsza P. M. Ostrobramska
módl się za nami.

OUR LADY OF VILNA.

MY SLAV FRIENDS

BY

ROTHAY REYNOLDS

AUTHOR OF

"MY RUSSIAN YEAR," "THE GONDOLA," ETC.

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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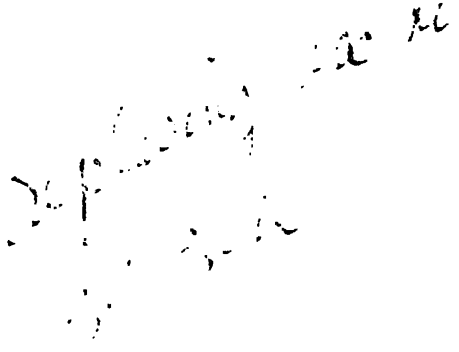

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TO

CORPORAL H. H. MUNRO

(*22nd Royal Fusiliers*)

MY DEAR "SAKI,"

I beg you to accept this book in gratitude for your friendship, in admiration for your writings, and in reverence for the patriotism that has made you exchange a tender and a witty pen for the bayonet.

R. R.

M282585

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MY SLAV FRIENDS

CHAPTER I

A MAGNIFICENT coach was whirled into a courtyard of the Winter Palace by four horses with postillions in the imperial livery. It came to a standstill before a doorway, near which I was standing with a few other correspondents of foreign newspapers, who were enjoying the sunshine of a May morning, before going into the palace to see a sight that will remain memorable to all time: the opening of the first Russian parliament by Nicholas II.

"Autocracy puts a brave face on abdication in favour of democracy," said one of the men, as he caught sight of the carriage.

An officer in a fine uniform and an ecclesiastic in a blue cassock, whom I assumed to be the gentleman-in-waiting and the chaplain of a great personage, were seated in the carriage with their backs to the horses. A lacquey opened the door of the coach, and the officer got out and stood at attention. One expected to see an exquisite woman, a Grand Duchess crowned with a flaming kokoshnik of diamonds, step from that frivolous shrine of rosewood and lacquer and crystal and red brocade.

The chaplain bent forward, perhaps to take a fan or to gather up the train of an imperial mantle.

" Voilà un vrai abbé de l'ancien régime," said the correspondent of a French newspaper.

And then I moved a little and saw that the clergyman was alone in the carriage and that he was taking into his hands a large picture, which stood upright on the seat of honour. He descended from the coach holding the picture, framed in jewels that sparkled in the sunlight, before his breast. It was an icon of the Sorrowful Face of Christ crowned with thorns.

" Tiens ! " said the Frenchman.

" Was für ein dummer Streich ist das ? " asked a German.

" Good Lord ! " exclaimed an Englishman, and in a sentence of academic elegance expressed the opinion that freedom could not flourish on a soil impoverished by superstition.

The clergyman passed into the palace with his burden, attended by the officer. And the coach of the icon was whirled out of the courtyard by the four horses with postillions in the imperial livery.

I had seen the picture before. It is kept in the wooden cottage which Peter the Great built with his own hands and made his home, while he watched a new capital rise magically from the marshy delta of the Neva. Anna Ivanovna took me there one afternoon. She had a favour to ask of Heaven and had found in the past that

she prayed well before the picture of the Sorrowful Face of Christ. The small room, in which the icon stands, was crowded with worshippers and perfumed with the burning wax of the candles spiked on the silver stand that is set in the midst. Anna Ivanovna had a candle she had bought at the door set up on the stand and lit. A deacon in a silver robe chanted prayers, to which singers made the response: "Lord, have Mercy." Anna Ivanovna crossed herself. She stood, looking at the Face of the Saviour through the golden haze of the candle-light, and prayed. The service lasted ten minutes, and when it was done she went with the rest to kiss the icon. In the passage outside a number of people were waiting to take our places for the next service. Anna Ivanovna was silent on the way home, and I was thinking of a child-in-arms whom I had seen lifted up by a man to kiss the Sorrowful Face. And the picture the child had kissed was beloved by Peter the Great. He went nowhere without it. When he travelled in foreign parts and when he went to the wars, he took the icon with him. His descendants cherish it for his sake and for the sake of Him whose likeness it bears.

I thought of these things when I saw the icon come in state to the palace and when, looking down from a gallery of the Hall of St. George, where the members of the Imperial Duma and the Imperial Council stood to hear the speech from the throne, I saw that it lay on a lectern in their midst. Anthony, Metropolitan of Petro-

grad and Ladoga, bowed before it as he called down the blessing of the Almighty on the deliberations of the untried legislators. A cloud of incense from the golden censer in his hand enfolded it for a moment. And the Tsar did homage to the similitude of the Face of the Tsar of Tsars, the palladium of the imperial house as well as the consolation and inspiration of the multitude.

It was fitting that the icon, beloved by Peter, should grace a ceremony in which Nicholas II continued the work, begun by his great ancestor, of approximating Russian institutions to those of Western Europe. It was fitting that, on the threshold of a new era, at the hour in which the nation turned its face resolutely to the light of the West, its representatives should be reminded by those venerable rites their forefathers learnt from the Greeks that the light came first to Russia out of the East. It was fitting that the best men of the Russian empire, as the Tsar called them, should look on the Sorrowful Face of Christ and remember that in its contemplation the Russian people have learned to prize self-sacrifice above all other virtues.

These reflections might be developed in a treatise, that would fill a bulky volume, of the progress of Russia from the accession of Peter the Great to the present time, in a lengthy discussion of the influence of the Byzantine empire on Russian civilization, and in a series of essays on the psychology of the Russian people. My

present scheme is less ambitious than these. I am going to write of people I have met, of cities I have visited, of manor-houses and third-class railway-carriages, of shrines and play-houses, of servant-girls and politicians and station-masters and Polish countesses, of Jews and priests and dancing-girls and of the Queen of Poland, of the jumble of people I lingered with, or jostled against, in going up and down the Russian empire. And if any of these people push me on to the terrain of the historian or the antiquary or the mantua-maker or the theologian, I shall stay as long as is necessary to gather up the spoil I need for my enterprise, which is not merely to present my respectable acquaintances and tag-rag friends from Russia to the reader, in the hope that they may interest or entertain him, but also to help him to understand the way in which they look at life and to account to him for their behaviour. And it may be impossible to explain the attitude of a politician without animadverting on the fur-belows women wore in the year 1700, to appraise the art of an actress without a knowledge of theology, or to understand the conduct of a peasant without referring to the history of Leo the Isaurian. How can I explain why Roman Dmowski, most eminent politician of the Kingdom of Poland, always uses Atkinson's eau-de-Cologne and eschews the essence distilled by Jean Maria Farina, if I neglect the history of the Knights of the Sword and the proceedings of the Prussian Diet? To account for his preference I may have

to whirl the reader out of Russia on a visit to Poznan.

"We have the genius of all the other nations and also the Russian genius," said Dostoievsky proudly to a Frenchman; "hence we can understand you and you cannot understand us."

Although the novèlist's opinion may afford insufficient reason to refuse the task I have set myself, it may, at any rate, serve as an excuse for excursions down any pathways in which material suitable to its performance may be found. It will make a reference to the second Council of Nicæa or to the hymn-singing of Methodists pardonable when I treat of holy pictures, beloved by my Slav friends, whether they be pictures adorned with precious stones or oleographs in the corners of peasants' houses, Latin pictures above the gates of Polish cities or Greek pictures that ride in coaches with four horses and postillions in the imperial livery. For the present I beg the reader to reserve his judgment on the strange apparition of the icon of the Sorrowful Face of Christ in the courtyard of the Winter Palace, and to bear in mind that whether I take him to a parliament-house or down a street, into the boudoir of an actress or a railway-station, into a drawing-room or a tavern, there will look down on us, from a shining icon, a Saint or the Virgin or the Saviour of the World.

A WEDDING IN THE OLDEN TIMES.

CHAPTER II

IVAN IVANITCH is a stout and elderly man who likes a drop of rum in his tea. He is all for reform in the State and the maintenance of an Established Church. He chaffs every young man he meets about the wild oats he assumes him to be sowing, and he does not permit meat to be served at his table during Lent. His wife keeps one servant, and neither he nor she can speak French. When I call at their house, Ivan Ivanitch's mother, an aged and wrinkled woman, gets out of her armchair and makes me a low bow; for, like her son, she is old-fashioned.

Nothing is more talked about in Ivan Ivanitch's household than ecclesiastical affairs. He can tell one in which churches of Petrograd the deacons have the most sonorous voices, and his attitude towards bishops is exceedingly critical. I have even heard him go so far as to call His Holiness Kyril by the disrespectful diminutive Kyrilchick, dear little Kyril, for no better reason than that the bishop chants in a squeaky falsetto voice.

One day when I went to see him, Ivan Ivanitch was greatly exercised about the apparition of the Bishop of London in St. Isaac's cathedral. He spoke of the unparalleled astonishment of the

cathedral clergy when that prelate stepped out of a brougham arrayed in a golden cope and a golden mitre.

"Do English bishops always drive about like that?" he asked; "because ours never do." And then he burst out laughing.

"He had on a ring!" he said, when he was able to speak, and shouted with laughter again, as if an episcopal ring was the most ludicrous thing in the world. "A bishop with a ring!" he cried, "a bishop with a ring!" and lay back in his chair, bubbling over with merriment.

Now if I were asked to explain in a sentence why Ivan Ivanitch was so vastly amused at Dr. Winnington Ingram's ring, I should feel like the German philosopher whom Mme. de Staël asked to explain his system of philosophy in ten minutes. Were Ivan Ivanitch an ignorant man, it would be easy to account for his merriment by pointing out that it was of the same order as the merriment of illiterate persons who hear a conversation in a foreign tongue for the first time. But Ivan Ivanitch is not an ignorant man; on the contrary, he has received a good middle-class education and is an accomplished musician. His laughter was an echo from the past, and his merriment made me understand that there are still left in Russia the remains of that spiritual barrier that the Russians erected between themselves and the peoples of the West, formidable as the Great Wall of China.

I have already warned the reader that, at the

slightest provocation, I shall dash down some byway of knowledge, hoping that he will be so agreeable as to accompany me. To explain the behaviour of Ivan Ivanitch I propose to take a roundabout route through Tchernigov and Hastings, Rheims and Rome, Constantinople and Kiev, that will lead us into the realms of history and even of theology. And should this enterprise seem too troublesome, let me say that, without it, not only will it be impossible to understand why Ivan Ivanitch thought the Bishop of London's ring supremely comical, but also it will be impossible to understand a dozen other Russian friends I am about to present and, in a word, to understand Russia. And small wonder that Russia remains an enigma to most of us; for we and the Russians have known one another a very little while—to be precise, three hundred and sixty-three years. Allow me without further excuses or explanation to talk about a Saxon princess and good Queen Anne, about the importance of yeast and the importance of shaving and other equally serious matters, and have the charity to assume that there is method in what, at first sight, may appear to be madness.

As I have said, we have known each other a very little while, we and the Russians.

They say that Gytha, daughter of King Harold, who was slain at Hastings, married Vladimir, grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, and reigned with him in Tchernigov. She was young when she fled from Exeter to the continent. She may have

forgotten English ways at St. Omer and Bruges and at the court of Denmark, whence she came to Russia. But for aught I know she may have striven to give a Saxon tone to her Prince's court and protested that Byzantine dresses did not become her beauty; yet if she did, I think Vladimir taught her docility, for he was a masterful man and left this good advice to his sons: "Love your wives, and be not ruled by them."

Idle to speculate about the English princess's great adventure. Did it bring her happiness? or did she envy the lot of her aunt, who, as her epitaph records, "desiring spiritual nuptials, spurned marriage with several noble princes," and became a nun at Bruges? Did she long for the scent of English meadows and the sound of Latin prayers? Did she learn to love plains that are covered with snow, forests in which are no oak trees, and Greek pictures of the Virgin, black but comely? Did she tell her ladies tales of England, and teach Mstislav, her son, to say Ave Maria, like an English boy? or did she try to forget in silence the land she had left in sorrowfulness? Did she live to see her son Prince of Novgorod the Great and to reign with her husband in golden-throned Kiev, Mother of all Russian cities, *clarissimum decus Græciæ*? I cannot answer. The Russian chroniclers make no mention of the English princess who came to Tchernigov, and all that Karamzin, greatest of Russian historians, can tell us about her marriage he learnt from Danish and Norse chronicles.

Gida Garoldovna, Gytha, daughter of Harold, is lost in the pale mists of the Russian land; and no memorial of her remains save the legend of her coming, frail link between England and Russia. The English princess vanishes and a curtain falls between Russia and the West, that no wayfarer from England shall draw aside until five centuries have passed. Nothing in history more amazing or more lamentable.

Russia holds intercourse with all Christendom. The descendants of the Norse freebooter, who set up his rule in Rus, have prospered. They are admitted to the fellowship of kings. The Queen of Hungary, the Queen of Norway, the Queen of France, are princesses of Kiev, aunts of the husband of Gytha, daughters of Yaroslav the Wise. The brothers of the three Queens are married to daughters of German princes, of the King of Poland, of the Emperor Constantine. Foreigners are welcomed in Kiev. Merchants of Flanders and Germany, of Hungary and Scandinavia, trade in its marts. All roads lead to Kiev, says the proverb. Envoys of the Popes arrive from Rome with relics for churches, which Greek artists are ornamenting with mosaics that still adorn them and are as fair as those made for the Venetians. In 1048 the citizens see three French bishops, Gautier de Meaux, Goscelin de Chalignac, Roger de Châlons, pass through the streets to the palace of Yaroslav, ambassadors come to pray the Grand Prince to give his daughter Anna in marriage to the King of France. The

propriety of a marriage between a Russian princess and a Latin prince is not called in question. The consent of the Grand Prince to the match is gained, and the people of Kiev bid godspeed to Anna Yaroslavna, when she sets out on the perilous journey to the West. And *la bonne et religieuse Anne*, to use the language of French chroniclers, was anointed and crowned Queen of France in the cathedral of Rheims. Six hundred years later they will gravely discuss in Moscow the advisability of putting to death a Russian guilty of visiting foreign parts.

The Russian princess goes to France. The English princess comes to Russia. Then, as I have said, a curtain falls between the Russian land and Western Europe. The brilliant years, in which Russia held intercourse with all Christendom, are ended. Quickly the Russian people pile up barriers, that are almost insurmountable, between themselves and the friends of yesterday, quickly vanish the hopes of lasting amity that royal marriages have given, quickly the holy Russian land is hidden from Western eyes and quickly forgotten.

When Zoe, niece of the last Byzantine emperor, passed through Germany in 1472, on the way from Rome to Moscow for her marriage with Ivan III, she was magnificently entertained in Nuremberg; but the burghers did not know what manner of man her future husband might be, and were not certain that he was not a pagan. They told one another vaguely that he was a

powerful sovereign, whose realm was somewhere beyond Novgorod; and the chroniclers of the city recorded their belief that the Papal Legate, who accompanied the Princess, was going to that distant land to preach the Christian faith to its inhabitants. As for the English of that age: they knew more about the Man in the Moon than they did about the Grand Prince of Moscow.

What feud of kings, what rivalry in the possession of coveted territory, what eruption of national passion, what clash of arms drove the Russian people from the comity of European nations? None of these things. It was a spiritual, not a temporal, catastrophe which destroyed the union of Russia and the West: the schism in the Christian Church that followed the excommunication of Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople, by Rome in 1054. The services in the churches of Kiev, like those in the churches of Constantinople, were more elaborate and richer in liturgical eloquence than those of Canterbury or Rome; but the faith of Russians and Greeks and English and Romans was identical. They were all members of an international society over which the successors of the Fisherman presided. Papal Legates presided at councils of Greek bishops in Constantinople. Greek monks established themselves in the neighbourhood of Rome and enjoyed the special favour of the Popes. The quarrel that Michael Cerularius picked with Rome rent Christendom in twain; and the English and Russians found themselves, willy-nilly, in

opposing camps, like soldiers who fight for their princes without understanding the causes of their feuds. And that quarrel, which involved no dispute about doctrines until a schism had been made and Constantinople required excuses for maintaining it, not only marred the unity of Christendom, but was the main factor in the separation of the Russian people from the nations of the West.

Many years elapsed before the Russian legions were ranged against the Papacy. Some twenty years after the excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the brother of the Russian Queen of France placed the principality of Kiev under the protection of Pope Gregory VII, and sought his help in a dispute about the possession of the throne. What concern was it of his that a prelate living in Constantinople was under the ban of Rome? But the Russians found that they could not stand aside. The Church of Kiev was the daughter of Constantinople. The Russian Metropolitan and chief bishop was consecrated by the Byzantine Patriarch. Many of the bishops were Greeks, and they forced the Russian people to place themselves on the side of Constantinople. They taught their flocks, who looked to them for spiritual guidance and intellectual enlightenment, to regard the religious practices of the West with horror. It was due to them that the Russians learnt to consider any Latin, any Frenchman or Englishman or German or Swede, as a wicked and detestable Azymite—

that is to say, a person who worshipped in churches where azyme, unleavened bread, was used at the altar, a practice which was a horrible infirmity, a Jewish superstition—I am using the controversial expressions of Constantinople—and totally unchristian. Moreover, the Azymites were often guilty of another monstrous crime: they fasted judaistically on Saturdays. These men were, as a Greek bishop pointed out in the words of the Apostle Paul: dogs, bad workmen, schismatics, and also hypocrites and liars. What decent and God-fearing man could have dealings with such people? Let no Azymite princess become the bride of a Russian prince. Let no Russian princess imperil her soul by marriage with a Latin. Let Orthodox men and women avoid intercourse with those who have corrupted the pure Gospel with their detestable azyme. The Popes said they did not care what sort of bread was used at the altar. They used unleavened bread and saw no reason to change their custom; the Greek monks in the diocese of Rome used leavened bread. What did it matter? In the view of the Greeks the frivolity of such indifference was the final and irrefutable proof of the apostasy of the West. Let the Azymites consume a sacrament which was no more than dry mud; and let the Orthodox keep themselves unspotted by eschewing their society.

With the passage of the years these sentiments deepened. "If a Latin asks you for food and drink," wrote a Russian of the fourteenth century,

" give to him, because charity requires you to do so; but when he has partaken, smash the vessels from which he has eaten and drunk, lest you be contaminated." In Moscow, the third Rome, they looked with suspicion on the people of the Republic of Novgorod, because they harboured German and Swedish traders within the walls of their city. The use of azyme was found to be not the only iniquity of the Latins. The abandoned bishops of the West wore rings on their fingers. And they impiously shaved off their beards, thus destroying the image of God in man; for everybody who had seen an icon of the Trinity knew that the Eternal had a beard.

It is sometimes said that the civil wars of the Russian princes and the invasion of the Mongols, who dominated over the Russians and their rulers for two and a half centuries, were the causes of the isolation of Russia. This is not true. These calamities deterred foreigners from coming to Russia, but they did not, and could not, create in the minds of the Russian people the idea that the West was unclean and that contact with Latins was criminal. The barrier between Russia and the West was erected by the Russians themselves, and it was formed of yeast and bishops' rings and the abominable razors of Latin priests.

That wall is razed now, but I have succeeded in tracing its remains, which are not wanting in interest. There was Ivan Ivanitch, most orthodox, most pious Ivan Ivanitch, who likes a drop

of rum in his tea. I beg pardon: you know all about Ivan Ivanitch and the Bishop of London's ring, unless, like me, you have almost forgotten his singular behaviour in the course of a discussion which set out with a promise to explain it. His attitude to that ring was not due, as I pointed out, to ignorance; it was due to prejudices rooted in the history of his race.

I was relieved to find that Ivan Ivanitch did not consider the bishop was sinful; he merely considered him frivolous. But there are people in Russia who would hold that that ring was the mark of the celebrated and abominable Beast of the Book of the Revelation, and there are plenty of sober-minded persons who consider that shaving is wicked. A few years ago a council of Old Believers discussed the propriety of excommunicating persons who had been infected with ideas of the West and had shaved off their beards. And there is still a faithful remnant of dissenters who refuse to use cups and platters from which members of the Established Church have drunk and eaten, desiring to avoid the contamination of persons whose practices and beliefs are tainted with the virus of the apostate West, coffee-drinkers, tea-drinkers, smokers of tobacco, bread-worshippers, seduced by Aristotle and the Pope of Rome. And the religious aspect of yeast remains a living question. The Patriarch of Constantinople, a personage entitled to speak for Russians and Greeks alike, was at the pains to assure Leo XIII that Latin azyme remained

a bar to the ecclesiastical unity of East and West.

"I hope to see the Anglican and Russian Churches united," said an eminent Russian architect to me, "because they both celebrate the Eucharist in the same way."

He was spirited away from me before I had time to ask him to explain what he meant. His statement required elucidation; for the contrast between the simplicity of Anglican worship and the intricacy of Russian is remarkable. A pious friend gave me the explanation I required.

"The English clergy use leavened bread at the altar as we do," he said.

I saw the shades of Michael Cerularius and Cranmer embrace. Go abroad to learn the grandeur of the British nation. The simple words of the Russian made me realize that the master-stroke of the English Reformers was to rid our land of the poison of the accursed azyme, that still pollutes France and Poland and Spain. The compilers of the Book of Common Prayer plucked an olive branch for the Muscovites. Was Parker influenced by the opinions of Leo of Achrida, dauntless foe of Azymites? Did far-sighted Elizabeth understand that the extirpation of azyme would strengthen the commercial relations of the British with the subjects of Ivan the Terrible? Was Peter the Great a mere flatterer when he stated in London that the Princess Anne was a true daughter of the Orthodox Church? or did he desire to imply that the future Queen

of England was no more azymitic than a princess of Muscovy? I confess that I have neither the inclination nor the ability to solve these grave problems, which I commend to the attention of those societies existing for the purpose of uniting the Churches of Canterbury and Moscow. Whatever the result of their investigations may be, one glorious fact remains as a basis for ecclesiastical negotiations: the English are no Azymites.

In Petrograd I heard a Pan-Slav orator, dressed by a London tailor and manicured by a French demoiselle, denounce most of the countries of Christendom and proclaim that the mission of the Russian people was to bring the light of the gospel and of truth to the nations sitting in the darkness of the West. The applause with which these sentiments were received made it clear to me that the proud spirit of ancient Muscovy is not dead and that there are still men who hold, as their ancestors did, that Divine Providence has made Russia the chief depositary of apostolic doctrine and practice, defiled and outraged by Catholics and Protestants alike, conserved pure and incorruptible in the formularies and ceremonies of Orthodoxy.

So much for the reliques of the great wall. How did the English make a breach in it?

> Es ist eine alte Geschichte,
> Doch ist est immer treu;

and I am going to tell the tale again; for I have not infrequently met Englishmen who do not

know it and I wish to give myself the happiness of celebrating a glorious achievement of our race.

Richard Chancellor discovered Russia in the year 1553. And when I say that he discovered Russia, I do not employ the expression for effect or because it sounds startling, but do no more than use the language of our forefathers. An Elizabethan speaks of Chancellor's adventure as "the strange and wonderfull discouerie of Russia," and places the English seaman's achievement on an equality with that of the foreigners who "discouered lands so many hundred miles westward and southward of the streits of Gibraltar and of the pillars of Hercules." And this sixteenth-century comparison of Richard Chancellor's discovery with that of Christopher Columbus justifies the statement made earlier in this chapter: we have known each other a very little while, we and the Russians. We are only just beginning to understand the French, whom we have known from the earliest times of our existence as a nation, whose blood flows in our veins, whose words jostle the words of our Saxon forefathers in the speech of our rustics. Is it surprising that we and the Russians should sometimes find it difficult to understand one another?

But to my tale. It was in the late spring of the last year of the reign of King Edward VI that three ships set sail from Harwich on a voyage of discovery, the fleet of "the Mysterie and Companie of the Marchants adventurers for the discouerie of Regiones, Dominions, Islands and places un-

known." The commanders of the three ships, Sir Hugh Willoughby, Cornelius Durforth and Richard Chancellor, had been instructed by the Mysterie, acting on the advice of the Venetian, Sebastian Cabot, to sail north by the Arctic seas in the hope of discovering a passage to India and Cathay. Chancellor's ship, the *Edward Bonaventure*, arrived safely in the port of Vardö, on the extreme north of Norway, where the three captains had agreed to meet. A tempest had driven the other two ships far on the unknown seas, where, as was discovered when they were found after many weeks adrift, their crews perished of cold and hunger. After waiting for several days, Chancellor set sail again and "helde on his course towardes that unknown part of the world, and sailed so farre that hee came at last to the place where he found no night at all, but a continuall light and brightness of the Sunne shining clearly vpon the huge and mighty Sea." At the end of August the *Edward Bonaventure* sailed into the White Sea and the mariners landed on the shores of Muscovy; a memorable event, for no English feet had trod the ground of the holy Russian land since Gytha married the grandson of Yaroslav the Wise. It is true that Chaucer made his English knight go to Russia; but I suspect him of doing so for the sake of a rhyme—

> At Alisandre hee was, when it was wonne,
> full oft time hee had the bourd begon
> abower all nations in Pruce,
> In Lettowe hath he riden, & in Ruce.

That the knight went into Lithuania I will admit, for the Earl of Derby, afterwards King Henry IV, fought side by side with Teutonic knights against the Lithuanians and entered the city of Vilna as a conqueror; but the name of no Englishman has come down to us who visited Russia between the middle of the eleventh and the middle of the sixteenth centuries. But is it not possible that some Englishman went to Russia in the middle ages? Of course it is, but I refuse, on a supposition, to rob Chancellor and his men of the credit due to them.

By the rivers goes our Chancellor to the city of Moscow and the court of Ivan Grozny, Ivan who is to be Feared, on an adventure as strange as that of the Prince in the tale of the Sleeping Beauty. I have forgotten how they tell the tale in England. It is Tchaikovsky who tells it to the Russians in a ballet which is too unsophisticated for us to be allowed to see at Covent Garden. In the Marinsky Theatre one watches the Prince's skiff, with a fairy at the helm, glide to adorable music down a river, that winds through moon-lit woodlands, by cities and by castles, on the way to a forgotten palace in the depths of the forest. And in the palace the Prince, a Prince of the age of the Roi Soleil, wakes from the sleep of centuries the Beauty and the King and the Queen and the courtiers, who come to life in the seventeenth century wearing the costumes of the fourteenth. And our Chancellor's boat takes him into the past. He is a man of a race whose

mind was formed by mighty forces, that have never been deployed on the mind of Russia. The people of the city to which he goes fell asleep when chivalry was enthroning woman in the West and teaching men to reverence her, when disputatious schoolmen were teaching the art of logical thinking and were reasoning about heavenly things in the language of Aristotle; and they slept on while far away the music of the Renaissance made gladness in the West and the reproving voices of German Reformers thundered over Europe and were echoed from England and Poland and Scandinavia. To make clear that I am not fanciful, that I am not working up a case, I make bold to insert at this point a sentence from a learned work of a most learned Russian. "I should say," writes Professor Kluchevsky, of the University of Moscow, in a study of the Muscovites of the sixteenth century, "I should say—though with all reserve—that ancient Rus must have dwelt in complete detachment from the West, that it ignored and was ignored by the latter, and that it neither exercised any influence in that quarter nor received any influence in return."

And here is Chancellor and his companions, in doublet and hose, straying through the streets of Moscow, talking to men dressed in the hieratic garments of old Byzantium, going to the court of Ivan with a letter from the King of England, vaguely addressed to the Kings, Princes and Potentates who dwell by the frozen sea, *juxta*

mare glaciale, wondering, likely enough, whether the great ladies they may not see are as lovely as Englishwomen, vainly trying to peer through the opaque windows of the litters of Muscovite beauties, a little surprised to find that many fine gentlemen are as unlettered as English yokels.

Now what, apart from speculation, did we think of one another when we first met, we and the Russians? Candour requires me to admit that neither of us formed a high opinion of the other. We did not rush into one another's arms and confess that it was ridiculous that such charming people had never met before; on the contrary: mutual antipathy permitted no more than a frigid acquaintance, based on the hope that it would lead to material benefits to both parties. To tell the truth: both we and the Russians were exceedingly conceited. We believed—I do not say without justification—that we were the finest people in the world. The Venetian ambassador at the court of Henry VII hit us off very cleverly when he declared that, if we saw a handsome foreigner, we said that he was exactly like an Englishman or that it was a pity he was not an Englishman. And as for the Russians, if their pride was of a different order, it was no less exasperating. They were convinced that the spiritual privileges of Rome and the temporal privileges of Constantinople were united in Moscow. They were prepared to accept as axiomatic the statement made to Ivan the Terrible's successor by the Patriarch of Constantinople:

" Thy great Tsardom of Rus doth surpass all in piety, and thou alone art known throughout the universe as the one Christian Tsar."

We prided ourselves on our scholarship, and the Russians gloried in their ignorance of secular learning.

" All studies of humanitie they utterly refuse," reported Chancellor, when he returned to England; " concerning the Latine, Greeke, and Hebrew tongues, they are altogether ignorant in them."

From the point of view of a godly Russian of the period this statement was the highest praise. " Impious in the sight of God is every man who loveth mathematics," says an old Russian writer, " and a spiritual sin it is to study astronomy and the books of Greece." And a hundred years after Chancellor's discovery of Russia, many Muscovites saw the gravest danger to faith and morals in the studies which the more daring and emancipated were undertaking. Some young men, who had begun to learn Greek and Latin, abandoned the study of these languages on the ground that knowledge of them was perilous to the soul. Heresy lurked in the Greek letters and evil in the Latin tongue. " Whosoever hath studied the Latin language, hath wandered from the true road," wrote one of these repentant youths.

A passage in the report of his visit to Muscovy, which Chancellor delivered to Queen Mary, sets forth with great clarity the opinion the Russians formed of us and our opinion of them. After

stating that it is the custom in Russia to place a paper in the hand of a dead man, on which it is recorded that he died in the Orthodox Faith, Chancellor explains : " This writing or letter they say they send to S. Peter, who, receiving it (as they affirme) reades it, and by and by admits him into heaven, and that his glory and place is higher and greater than the glory of the Christians of the Latine church, reputing themselves to be followers of a more sincere faith and religion than they : they hold opinion that we are but half Christians, and themselves onely to be the true and perfect Church : these are the foolish and childish dotages of such ignorant Barbarians."

Here, then, is a frank statement of the attitude we took to one another when we first met. Harmless to recall it now, for we can look into one another's eyes, with the candour of those who know that their friendship will endure, and say : Who would have thought, when we first met, that we should become fast friends?

the Russians, had they been in the habit of writing books, might have replied with a pertinent *tu quoque*. Rarely is there a word of praise in these writings. When Robert Best, who wrote in Queen Mary's reign, says that the Russian women can sew well and embroider with silk and gold excellently, the statement remains in one's mind simply because it is agreeable. At the very outset of our acquaintance with the Russian people we were given a prejudice against them through the inability of the pioneers, who penetrated into their country, to get more than a superficial view of its life. We knew nothing about one another's souls. And in this matter we were no worse than other Europeans. Seventy years after Chancellor landed in Russia, the question whether the Russians were Christians or not was gravely discussed in Sweden. And our failure to understand the Russians and to discern their good qualities was not entirely due to lack of sympathy or of imagination; they held us at a distance, standing aloof in their strange Byzantine garments, isolating themselves in an inexorable orthodoxy, refusing to let us see their hearts. I confess that I become depressed when I read the old books that foreigners wrote about Russia, unless I bear in mind that the hard and glacial Russians portrayed in them sang songs that seem fragrant of England, like—

Sing, O sing again, lovely lark of mine,
Sitting there alone amid the green of May!

I must recall some fragment of ancient prayer, the words of the old prince who used to say, when he saw the rising sun: "Thou hast made me see, Christ, O Lord, and Thou hast given me this beautiful light," or the injunction of another prince to his children: "Pass not by a man without greeting him with kind words." These are the touches that might have made us one long ago, had they been given by the old writers. As it was, our forefathers regarded Russia as nothing more than a dumping-ground for English goods, and this is the view one reads between the lines of the pompous letters in which Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth assured Ivan the Terrible of the sisterly affection they bore him. And the Russians themselves understood that the interest of foreigners in their country was pecuniary. "Everywhere we have upon our shoulders Germans, Jews, Scotchmen, Gypsies, Armenians, Greeks and merchants of other nationalities, who suck our blood," wrote Krizhanich, a Croatian who was more Russian than the Russians, in the middle of the seventeenth century.

It was the Russians who made the first timid advances towards friendship, and both they and we may thank the Poles, that race that unites in itself Slav charm and Latin culture, for being the indirect agents to bring us nearer to one another. In the middle of the seventeenth century scholars from western Russia, where learning had flourished under Polish inspiration,

exercised a powerful influence on the bolder spirits of Moscow. There were those who heard them gladly, and there were those who spurned them, holding their learning to be evil. The Renaissance came to the West in pomp, and a Pope considered the publication of the text of Tacitus to be his greatest glory. Its fascination enthralled us, and so sensitive to its beauty were we, that even our churchmen hastened to sacrifice the Christian rhymes of their breviaries to pagan elegance.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore
Funda nos in pace
Mutans nomen Evæ,

they used to sing in choirs; and now at vespers of Our Lady I can never hear them sing

Mutans Evæ nomen,

depriving me of the music of a rhyme, without thinking of the great force that transformed the West. To Russia the Renaissance came timidly and by stealth, not greeted as a revelation, but derided as a temptation; not boldly displaying the treasures of pagan Greece and Rome, but humbly suggesting that the Latin alphabet was not the formula of a noxious spell. And to help the missionaries were the inhabitants of the Niemetzkaya Sloboda, the German Suburb, outside the gates of Moscow. The suburb owed its name to the fact that it was at first the home of

the German traders brought from Novgorod, when Ivan the Terrible crushed that Republic and transported ten thousand Novgorodian families to his capital. The aliens among them lived without the gate, in order that they might not taint the holiness of the third Rome. In the second half of the seventeenth century the suburb was cosmopolitan and, although it retained its old name, the atmosphere was more British than German. Oliver Cromwell unconsciously gave an impetus to Anglo-Russian friendship, when his triumph compelled adherents of the House of Stuart to leave their native land; for some of the exiles, English and Scottish men and women of breeding and fortune, took refuge in Russia and afforded the Muscovites opportunities of seeing aspects of Western life which traders and adventurers had been unable to display. The German suburb was as curious to Moscow as a Hottentot village at Earlscourt to London, and a great deal more interesting. Its inhabitants might be unbaptized pagans; but the houses of brick they built themselves were marvellous. They might, poor creatures, know nothing of the divine worship of pictures; but they knew how to embellish their quarter with trees, and the flowers and the fountains of their gardens were charming. The manners of the foreigners must have shocked Moscow. What talk there must have been about them in the secluded apartments of great ladies, locked in by twenty-seven locks, where any bit of gossip was a relief

in the monotonous round of household duties and enormously long family prayers.

"My little dove, those ladies walk abroad and expose their faces to the gaze of strangers."

"The brazen huzzies!"

"It is said that they do not paint their faces."

"What immodesty!"

"My little dove, they wear dresses that display the form of their bodies."

"Horspidy pomily, Lord have mercy!"

"But they are thin, very thin."

"Glory to God, my darling soul, then our men will not wish for their love."

I hardly think that I have allowed my imagination to run away with me in the invention of this dialogue; but I have put the lady who gave glory to God in the wrong, for sometimes the Muscovites were unable to resist the fascination of a British lady. They found their way into English and Scottish homes, where ladies talked of new books they had received from abroad, sang ballads and played the lute, took their part in the conversation of their husbands. The agreeable life of the German suburb and the smile of a bonnie Scotchwoman were the final proof of the harmlessness of Latin letters and a powerful argument on the side of learned men, who were trying to persuade Moscow that the study of mathematics would not imperil the salvation of the soul. Old-fashioned people may

have quoted the proverb, "Flee from the beauty of women as Noah fled from the deluge," but what is the use of quoting proverbs to men who are in love? Our ladies turned the heads of Muscovites, and Russian bridegrooms went to the altar with British brides. There was, for instance, a boyar, named Artemon Matviéev, who married a Miss Hamilton, destined to play an unconscious but important part in the *rapprochement* of Russia and the West. Obviously a Scotchwoman was not going to combine the life of a nun with that of a wife. She was not going to be mewed in a *terem*, like a Russian lady, nor was she going to cry her eyes out if her husband neglected to chastise her from time to time. Miss Hamilton, become a Russian boyarina, gave a British tone to her home, and guests saw the novelty of a Russian wife presiding at table and being treated as an equal by her husband. To the Muscovites the appearance of a young girl, Natalia Narishkin, at the entertainments given by Matviéev and his wife, must have seemed stranger and more daring than the presence of the Scotch boyarina; for Russian girls of the period were guarded as strictly as the ladies of a zenana, and even young people who were betrothed were not allowed to see each other until the wedding night, when husband and wife looked on each other's faces for the first time. But the dignity and charm of the Scotchwoman and the modesty of the beautiful Natalia captivated the boyar's friends, and reconciled them to a departure from accepted

custom, which must at first sight have seemed scandalous. The Tsar Alexis, who was a widower, came often to the house, and, perhaps seduced as much by the charm of a cultured household as by the bright eyes of a young girl, determined to marry Natalia. She became his wife and the mother of Peter the Great, most amazing of all revolutionaries, the sovereign who forced the Russian people to abandon their customs, to break with the past, and, on pain of severe punishment, to adopt the manners of western Europe. Natalia was a silly person, and, even when she was bundled out of the Kremlin after the death of Alexis, and sent to live in the country with the little Peter, she took no trouble about his education and allowed him to run wild. Yet it is open to question whether he would have taken so violent a prejudice in favour of Western institutions, as was actually the case, had his mother not been brought up in an atmosphere which was more British than Russian. "It is difficult to make us budge," wrote a Russian, "but, once we start, we do not stop; we do not walk, we run; we do not run, we fly." And when Peter, with a sheaf of draconic ukases in one hand and a knout in the other, awoke the Russian people from the inertia of centuries, they flew with incredible rapidity into the arms of the West. Away with Byzantine clothes and old traditions! Down with ignorance, and not a gentleman in all the land shall get married until he has learnt to read and write! Turn the ladies

of Russia out of their terems and dress them in hoop-petticoats and powdered curls! You won't shave off your ridiculous beard, Sir, and look like an Englishman? Very well, then you'll pay an annual tax for your stupidity. You won't go to an evening party and comport yourself with the grace of a Frenchwoman, Madam? Then off with you to prison! And is Miss Hamilton of Moscow to have no credit for all this bustling and hustling of the Russian people by the son of the Tsaritsa she had educated? I am of opinion that we owe her a share of our gratitude for a revolution which brought the day nearer when the frigid intercourse between England and Russia should be turned to friendship.

Here, then, were the Russians dressed out like Europeans, and, when we saw them in their new finery, it entered our heads that, after all, they were very much like ourselves. It was a sudden revelation, such as that which came to a young man of my acquaintance, who, happening to visit a public swimming-bath at a time when a number of common boys came for a bathe, perceived, as he afterwards related to me with an air that showed the depth of the impression made upon him, that, when they were naked, they looked exactly like gentlemen. At first, however, we were inclined to treat the Russians as persons who were trying to squeeze their way into a society which they were fitted neither by education nor breeding to adorn. We were not quick to understand the temper of the arch-revolu-

tionary or the seriousness of his determination to place Russia on an equality with the other European powers. Foreigners were disposed to regard Peter as an exotic potentate, whose proceedings were a legitimate cause of amusement. "He is mechanically turned," wrote Bishop Burnet, who was charged with the task of expounding the doctrines of the Church of England to the Tsar during his visit to London, "and seems designed by nature rather to be a ship-carpenter, than a great prince." Eighteen years later a French wit said that he was born to be the captain of a Dutch ship. And this was the man who undertook to give Russia a *vie mondaine*, modelled on that of the most polished countries of the West. Elegant Europe rocked with laughter at the descriptions of Russian entertainments sent to courts and chancelleries by the foreign ambassadors at St. Petersburg, who added to the piquancy of their narrative by inserting here and there some malicious phrase, such as "the ladies drank hard" of one of Campredon's accounts of a court festivity. As Waliszewski very truly says in his delightful book on Peter the Great: "ses Russes demeurent pour la plupart tout aussi rustres qu'ils étaient, en devenant grotesque par-dessus le marché."

Now that the Russians have established themselves as the equals, in some respects the superiors, of the other peoples of Europe, there are some of them who do not like foreigners to pry too curiously into their past. That is a great mistake.

If people would let us know their past imperfections, it would be easier to appreciate their present virtues. We must be allowed to see the ludicrous initiation of the Russian people in the code of a social system which differed *in toto cælo* from that which they had received from the Greek empire, if we are to appreciate the amazing rapidity with which they assimilated the manners of polished Europeans. Less than fifty years after the death of Peter the Great, a foreigner would have found it difficult to detect any greater difference between the society of St. Petersburg and that of London than exists at the present day. The Russians had become polished men and women of the world, who chattered to one another in French and were beginning to forget their own language. They indulged in the same pleasures and peccadilloes as people of rank in the other capitals of Europe. The men had learnt to make love with elegance and the women to yield with prettily contrived reluctance. They met at the play, at the opera, at balls and masquerades, and at Peterhof, with its palace and fountains, that seemed translated from Versailles, and cottages that recalled the artificial rusticity of the Petit Trianon. Ladies dabbled in literature and read the poems of Lomonosov about sunsets. They went to see the historical plays of Sumarokov who claimed magnificently that " what Athens saw and Paris sees, that, you, O Russia, after a long period of transition, have seen at once from

my efforts." People read the *Spectator* and the *Tatler*, or translations of articles from the *Rambler* printed in the *St. Petersburg Gazette.* They subscribed to *The Industrious Bee* and *The Drone* and *All Kinds of Things*, papers in which Russian writers flattered Addison by imitating his style. They admired Petrov's translation of *Paradise Lost* and made Voltaire a fashion. And their empress, with that curious instinct that is not infrequently to be noticed in the immoral, wrote fables and didactic comedies in which she rebuked the follies of the age. "We do not walk, we run; we do not run, we fly." Is it not true, that saying of a modern Russian?

And what of the common people? The common people! What had they to do with the matter in hand? I am writing of that development of Russian civilization that made friendship between the English and the Russians possible. What had the common people to do with international relations and the regard of one nation for another? It was their humble lot, both in England and Russia, to toil, and thus to give persons of breeding the leisure and the wealth to play the game of statecraft or to trifle elegantly with life. While the upper classes of Russia were acquiring the grace required to play a part in the society of Europe, the culture of the moujik remained what it was in the days of Ivan the Terrible, or, if you like, of Yaroslav the Wise. But both the Russian moujik and the British yokel may be eliminated from this discussion. It is more

germane to my subject to mention that the dress which the wife of Peter the Great wore at her coronation was confected in Paris. That was an event of real importance. A few years before it took place the dresses of Catharine had excited the ridicule of Western ladies. The amiable Margravine of Bayreuth, who saw her in Berlin, declared that her bodice was old-fashioned and had obviously been bought in a rag-shop. When the attitude of European society to Russia was doubtful, at a stage which may not improperly be described as the ought-we-to-call-on-her stage, the news that Catharine was crowned in a Paris dress could not be disregarded. Here was a sign of progress and a proof of amendment of manners.

There are not wanting Russians, and also foreigners, who are of opinion that the revolution begun by Peter the Great and sustained by his successors was a gigantic mistake. They hold that it would have been better to have allowed Russian civilization to have developed in its own way, and, although they are inclined to adopt a line of argument that is historically false, there is a good deal to be said in favour of their point of view. It is a nice question to discuss when the lamps are lit and the samovar bubbles on the table and the glasses are filled with golden tea. Let us confine ourselves, for the moment, to facts. For good or for ill the upper classes of Russia adopted the dress, the customs and the ideas of Europe with marvellous rapidity.

Catharine I had French dresses, and Catharine II glibly enunciated the liberal and enlightened doctrines that flowed so easily from the pens of French philosophers. A period of less than fifty years separates the imperial purchase of a French dress and the imperial enunciation of French ideas; and in that time the upper classes of Russia had finished the work of bridging the gulf that divided them from the upper classes of the West. In the first half of the eighteenth century the Russians looked like Europeans; in the second half of that century they were Europeans.

Thus a community of manners and ideas placed the Russians and the English on the same footing. But they were like people who, meeting from time to time in drawing-rooms, please one another by amiability of manner and ingenuity of conversation, yet make no effort to convert intercourse into friendship and remain ignorant of one another's characters and ideals. We are now united by the strongest tie that can bind two nations together: the task of defending our homes from a common foe. Standing side by side, we may look back and trace the development of our knowledge of one another. And we may say of our friendship, as Adrienne Le Couvreur said of the friendship of Fontanelle, *difficile à acquérir*, and add with the same confidence that she displayed, *mais plus difficile à perdre.*

A TSARITSA OF THE END OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER IV

HAPPENING, one day, to be in the ancient city of Pskov, I went into a beer-shop and drank a glass of exceedingly small beer. I also made conversation with the small boy behind the counter, and, in the course of it, told him that I was an Englishman.

Said the small boy with great earnestness: "Can you, then, tell me whether Sherlock Holmes is a real person or not?"

Now I am inclined to consider the small boy of Pskov as a symbolic figure, standing for the knowledge of England possessed by Russia. Nothing has struck me more forcibly, in going up and down the Russian land, than the fact that the Russians know a great deal more about our literature and our institutions and our history than we do about theirs. It is in the nature of things that this should be so. Little more than two hundred years ago, as we have seen, Peter the Great came to the conclusion that the national life of Russia was not on the right lines and decided to approximate it to Western models. He and his coadjutors ransacked Europe for what they wanted, and made the Russians the most inquisitive and most imitative people of the Continent.

Peter could set up Swedish ministries, or colleges,

as they used to be called, in Petrograd; but a swarm of foreigners had to be employed to set their complicated machinery in motion; and, if the administration of the Russian empire was not to be permanently conducted by strangers, Russians had to copy their methods. Peter could found a Naval College and a School of Surgeons and create an Academy of Learning magnificently by issuing an ukase, but he had to plump down foreigners in the professorial chairs he endowed, and the business of students was to acquire from them foreign learning and foreign ideas. He could order Russian society to take its tone from Paris; but to enable it to do so, it was necessary for Russians to sit and watch Frenchmen giving them an exhibition of high breeding and elegance of manners. Peter hurled into Russia a heterogeneous collection of foreigners, picked up anyhow and anywhere: chancellery clerks, ship-carpenters, milliners, engineers, actresses, professors, surgeons, drill-sergeants. And the Russians, who had abandoned their own way of governing the State and of governing the Church, who had renounced their former manner of life and torn their books of complicated etiquette to shreds, sat at the feet of the foreigners, deferring to them, like young nuns to an abbess, in order to learn how to begin life anew. Accordingly they formed a habit, which they have never lost, of acquiring information about foreign countries and of copying foreign methods and foreign manners.

" Lawks ! " interjected the daughter of a Russian

Cabinet minister in the course of a conversation with a Scotchwoman.

" My dear ! " said the horrified Scotchwoman, " where did you learn that dreadful expression ? "

" My English governess always uses it," replied the girl.

Now, ever since the time of Peter the Great, there have been plenty of animate foreign models, imported into Russia, as faulty as the peculiar English governess of the Cabinet minister's daughter. Russians are aware of this, and, desiring to accomplish the work they have undertaken thoroughly, find in the fact a new incentive to curiosity and the acquisition of better knowledge from abroad.

When Vassili, to speak of a trifling indication of this spirit, asks me whether Englishmen dress up in dinner-jackets to make afternoon calls and learns that they do not, I know that, whatever he may have done in the past, he will be careful to eschew dinner-jackets in the afternoons of the future.

Vassili's spirit is in violent opposition to that of Erich, a Prussian boy whom I knew in Berlin. We were walking one day in the Unter den Linden, and fell in with an English friend of mine, who, it was evident, had degenerated under Prussian influence, for he was wearing a black tail-coat with a bowler hat. I chaffed him, affecting dismay and horror at his temerity.

" One can wear a bowler with a tail-coat in Germany," he said.

I begged him to think of his aged parents, of his country, his religion, and mend his manners before it was too late. And Erich, the merry, mercurial Erich, being a Prussian and therefore incapable of understanding that I was talking nonsense, undertook the defence of my erring friend.

"We're in Berlin," he remarked tartly; "your London fashions have nothing whatever to do with us. Your Herr friend is perfectly right. His costume is most elegant."

A great deal might be said for and against the attitude of Vassili and the attitude of Erich to foreign things. Vassili's spirit is old-fashioned and traditional. "From time immemorial," said Prince Andrew Vyazemsky, the poet and politician who was born in the reign of Catharine II and died at a great age in 1878, "we have been accustomed to put up our umbrellas by the Neva when it rains in Paris." Erich's spirit is younger, and, not a great number of years ago, would have been considered by his fellow-countrymen to have savoured of novelty. Nowadays it seems almost unbelievable that, seventy years ago, the progressive Germans who contributed to the *Jahrbücher* of Halle, publications that appealed to the advanced and daring young men of the day, should have pointed to France as the land from which salvation was to come to Germany. One must see in the pages of one of these *Jahrbücher*, printed in good Gothic letters, the exhortation of a German to Germans to become true Frenchmen,

in order to convince oneself that such a sentiment was ever set down by a German pen. And I can conceive no more excruciating torture to which the Allies could put the Kaiser than to imprison him in Frederick the Great's library at the Palace of Sans-Souci at Potsdam, where he would find himself encircled by shelves on which every one of the books is French.

Which of the two views is right, that of Vassili or that of Erich, I have no time at present to discuss: to be frank, I do not know. Perhaps the one view is better for Vassili and the other for Erich. But I do know that Vassili's spirit makes Petrograd a more habitable city than Erich's spirit makes Berlin. Petrograd is far nearer to Paris than is Berlin, nearer to the Paris of gaiety and elegance, nearer to the Paris on whose buildings is carved the motto, of which the best men and women of France and Russia and England desire to make themselves worthy: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

It would, however, be a great mistake to think that the Russians are servile and uncritical imitators of foreigners. Some years ago the working-people of Petrograd were agitating for an universal eight hours day, an idea, a shibboleth, if you like, which they had undoubtedly received from the West.

"But even in England we don't have an universal eight hours day," said an Englishman to a factory-girl, who was one of the boldest leaders of the agitators.

"What has that to do with us?" asked the girl. "We are going to teach you."

The retort was a spirited one, and in it sounded the voice of the new Russia. Two centuries ago the Russians imported our clothes and our manners and our ideas wholesale, pell-mell, then they began to discriminate and select, and now they are elaborating and improving. "You have the Kingdom of the Present," wrote one of the most daring of Russian thinkers a few years ago, addressing the peoples of the West; "we are the seekers of the Kingdom of the Future." Europe has taught Russia much. Soon it will be the turn of Russia to teach Europe. I should not care to say that no lessons are to be learnt by us from Russian peasants, although I am certain that Irish peasants or Spanish peasants can teach us those lessons equally well. I am thinking of other teachers, men who see the flaws in the structure of our society, men who are not deceived by the splendour of its imposing façade, men who have profited by the study of our errors as well as by the knowledge of our wisdom, harbingers of the Golden Age, when the happiness of the Russian multitude will provide more cogent proof of the holiness of the Russian land than the lamps of the countless shrines, in which believer and unbeliever alike have found inspiration.

Meanwhile dreamers and workers, and those who dream and also work, follow carefully the course of Western affairs. I go to the Department

of Agriculture to speak with a bureaucrat about the changes in the system under which the Russian peasants hold their land, and find that he has made a painstaking study of the methods adopted by the British Government to ameliorate the lot of the Irish peasants. He states that he has found the study profitable. I take up a popular newspaper and find an elaborate analysis of the Irish Home Rule bill. The matter-of-fact, not to say dull, style of the article makes it clear to me that the editor of the popular newspaper considers the importance of its subject sufficient to command the attention of his readers, and that the writer does not find himself under the necessity of cajoling the public to study a serious foreign problem by sacrificing clarity to sprightliness. The Russian editor assumes that his readers are intelligent men and women; whereas the British editor is apt to assume that they are half-educated children. In the past it has been impossible to follow the course of Russian politics in the columns of the British press; when I have not been able to get Russian newspapers I have found it necessary to read French and German newspapers in order to keep in touch with Russian affairs.

It is not our politics alone that interest the Russians. A new play by a notable writer is produced in London and a few days later the people of Moscow and Petrograd read an account of it in their newspapers. A remarkable novel is published in London; criticisms of it appear in

the Russian press and copies of it on the counters of Russian booksellers. As for our older writers, they are household names. Dickens is as familiar in Russia as in England. Even the monks of the Troitsky Lavra read Walter Scott. And hundreds of times I have been asked by Russians whether I have read that most amusing book, *Three Men in a Boat.* The success of Mrs. Eleanor Glyn's books in Russia is a complete refutation of the statement, sometimes made in this country, that there is no Russian middle class. No English writers are more popular in Russia than Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. One night they were acting plays of Bernard Shaw at three of the Petrograd theatres, two in Russian and one in Polish. And the enthusiasm for Wilde induced a theatrical manager to stage a translation of his least successful play, *The Duchess of Padua.* As for us, we have read Tolstoi, and educated persons are beginning to feel a little ashamed if they have not read at least one of Dostoievsky's novels. Even our literary critics are attempting to impress the public with the breadth of their culture by embellishing their paragraphs with the curious names of unfamiliar Russian writers. I was amused to find myself told by one of them that a passage from one of my books was " in truth to life and art "—I haven't the remotest idea what the phrase means—equal to anything that Artzybashev had ever written. I was, of course, grateful to the writer; for obviously his, or her, readers

would form the highest opinion of a person who did anything so wonderful as to write as finely as a man with the name of Artzybashev; at the same time I thought the compliment back-handed, for the novel that made Artzybashev famous was so singularly improper that the Russian censor suppressed it after everybody in Russia had read it. My chaste muse burst into tears when I showed her the criticism. I am afraid the truth is that the critic had never read a line of Artzybashev, whose novel at that time had not been translated into English. But the artifice pleased me—I hope I am not traducing its author—for in it I saw an aspiration.

Books from England, good and bad, are poured into Russia, but when they get there they are exposed to keen criticism.

"Who is that dreadful *canaille* of an Englishman who wrote a book called *Self-Help?*" asked a Russian student.

I found that the poor boy had been condemned to read that apotheosis of bourgeois ideals at a provincial school. And the political opponents of the late Mr. Pobiedenostsev added the weapon of ridicule to their armoury, when they discovered that he had superintended the translation of Miss Corelli's tale about the small child that hanged itself with a pale blue sash under the influence of emotions derived from the principles of infidelity in which it had been reared. The reason why most educated Russians exercise discrimination in the

choice of English books is that they have a great literature of their own with which to compare them, and, moreover, know the finest books in the English language, as one of the most brilliant lecturers Cambridge has produced might have discovered, had his Russian friends been candid. He came to Petrograd to give a course of lectures on English literature, and his name and reputation attracted a large audience. His lectures, which had been appreciated in English provincial towns, were admirable, but elementary. And Russians expressed disappointment. "We know all this," they said, and indicated that they had expected a series of elaborate psychological studies of the British poets. From the small boy of Pskov, who loved Sherlock Holmes, to the Grand Duke who made a fine translation of *Hamlet*—most chivalrous, most spiritual Grand Duke Constantine, whose soul may God rest—the Russian nation has done homage to English letters.

And they know our history. Some years ago one of our most noted publicists undertook to advise a company of the progressive men and women of Moscow as to the course they should pursue in order to obtain the political reforms they desired. He adorned his speech by illustrations and analogies from English history, and, when he had ended, Russians were charitable enough to point out to him the historical errors he had made. It is not an episode on which I care to dwell. It is largely due to their knowledge of

our past that Russians are able to understand us and to sympathize with us in the present. And as for us, no pretty pictures of idealized Russian peasants, no translations of psychological Russian novels, no enthusiasm for the performances of Russian dancing-girls, will give us a true understanding of the Russian people. Unless we are at the pains to acquaint ourselves with Russian history we shall neither be able to understand the character of the Russians nor to sympathize with them in the difficult discharge of the tasks that face them.

The trouble the Russians take to inform themselves about the domestic policy of the British people has already been mentioned, and the part played by the Russian press in this matter has been indicated. Before the war the tendency of editors of newspapers both in England and in the United States, with certain notable exceptions, was to regard Russia simply as a source of melodramatic copy. Aware that the tastes of newspaper readers differ, by a convenient arrangement the editors assigned to each capital the function of ministering to a special need. From Paris came frivolity and *faits divers*. Vienna provided rumours, invaluable to leader-writers and elderly gentlemen who weave theories in clubs. The Berlin messages were couched in terms that only attracted the serious. And the thrill that some people appear to require with their breakfast was expected from Petrograd. Occasionally the course

of events upset this neat scheme and readers were astonished to hear of frivolity in Berlin and seriousness in Paris. And they were still more astonished, if they visited those capitals, to discover reckless Berliners, drinking champagne with fair damsels in American bars at five o'clock in the morning, and sober Parisians, sitting in churches more crowded than those of London. Petrograd they rarely visited and its reputation was more consistently maintained. In the past there have not been wanting unscrupulous writers to supplement the efforts of the Russians to supply the needs of the foreign press. An American journalist once showed me a telegram he was about to send to New York. It was an account of the trial of a prominent revolutionary and ended with the words : " he was condemned to the mines of Siberia for life." The fellow might have said with equal accuracy that Mrs. Pankhurst had been condemned to the galleys.

" But," I said, " people aren't condemned to the mines. They haven't been condemned to the mines for years and years."

" I know," he said coolly. " It's the technical phrase we always use. It gives a thrill."

And once I took up an important London paper in a Petrograd hotel and found a flaming account of a most ordinary episode of life in the capital during the revolutionary period. It was, at that time, the practice to send a guard of Cossacks with the curious black vehicle in which money was

conveyed to the treasury. Petrograd was amused at the innovation. Often I have seen the cavalcade sweeping down the Nevsky, some twenty Cossacks in khaki, mounted on hardy little horses, followed by detectives on bicycles. Pedestrians used to stop to watch the procession and I used to remark that they generally grinned. Notice the simplicity of the process by which this humdrum incident of the daily life of the capital was transformed and converted to the noble purpose of thrilling a British breakfast-table. The practised purveyor of news began by changing the Cossack ponies into enormous horses and went on to make the people in the street turn pale with fright and stand rooted to the ground, fearing that the Cossacks would cut into them with their nagaikas. And he conceived a superb incident for the climax of his highly coloured narrative; he made the gigantic horse of a huge Cossack, with red hair flowing to his shoulders, shy at a bright red motor-car, which happened to be standing outside St. Isaac's cathedral, and the infuriated soldier gallop up to the car and bring the thong of his nagaika down on the shuddering form of the chauffeur, who had not dared to move, knowing that had he done so he would have been immediately shot. That was, I suppose, the sort of tale the fool who wrote it thought the British public hankered for. It is my belief that the British public desires the truth.

People began to believe that tales of this sort

were typical of Russian life and that the supply was unlimited. One morning I read in a Petrograd newspaper an exciting tale of brigands in the Caucasian mountains, which contained all the proper elements of romance: a lonely castle, picturesque robbers, a kidnapped princess, sorrowing parents and an heroic lover. I had no reason to doubt the truth of the story and wrote it out for an American News Agency, to which I occasionally sent articles. The American News Agency was charmed. The manager wrote to say that he could "take as much of that sort of stuff as you can possibly send." I pointed out to him that it was not in my competence to make Caucasian brigands perform for the benefit of the American public. It is true that the Russians did their best for a considerable period to satisfy the craving of foreigners for sensational incidents, but when their efforts proved unsatisfactory they were assisted to maintain the reputation they had gained by writers gifted with imagination. No invention seemed too outrageous, no calumny too wicked, to be given to the world as news from Russia. Count Witte once said to me: "Tell your fellow-countrymen to disbelieve ninety per cent. of the news they receive from Russia." He underestimated the value of the careful accounts of Russian affairs which were being sent abroad by reputable journalists, but, in the circumstances, I felt justified in communicating his view to the press.

Even so short a time ago as the spring of 1914, a ridiculous story about the influence, both at court and in government circles, of a peasant, named Rasputin, was widely circulated in the British press. We were told that this man posed as a saint, whereas his life was one of flagrant immorality; nevertheless he had been able to ingratiate himself with the Tsaritsa, to dominate the aristocracy, and to wield such an influence on the Tsar and the ministers that they made no important decision without consulting the adventurer and receiving his sanction. Rasputin, we were informed, was the Power behind the Throne.

It does not require more than a moment's consideration to see the stupid extravagance of this tale. Accept it, as it was told in the columns of some of the newspapers, and you are inevitably led to the conclusion that the Emperor, the Empress, the Cabinet and the Aristocracy had, at any rate temporarily, gone raving mad.

What was the truth? In Russia men are accustomed to show respect to those who they believe have learnt the art of speaking with God. Rasputin was reputed to be a man of austere life, and those who had recourse to him believed his prayers were answered. He came in the train of a bishop to the capital, and a pious lady of the court presented him to the Empress, who was impressed by his simplicity and faith. She liked him to pray with her and she liked to hear him speak of the things of God. When she was harassed and

weary, the words of the gospel on the lips of Rasputin soothed her and gave her comfort. The peasant may have played a part or, for aught I know, the flower of holiness may have withered in the glare of publicity when transplanted from the country to the capital. A courtier, who had the privilege of speaking freely, suggested to the Emperor that it was unsuitable to allow a peasant to come so often to court. The Emperor smiled indulgently, and, in a blunt sentence which I cannot permit myself to repeat, indicated that, for all he cared, a hundred Rasputins could come to court if the Empress found comfort and tranquillity in their spiritual ministrations. I should be as much inclined to accept a Russian tale of the influence of the late General Booth on the foreign and domestic policy of the British empire, which an ingenious Russian might have based on the amiability of Queen Alexandra to the creator of the Salvation Army, as the rodomontade about Rasputin which was foisted on the British public.

I have, indeed, often wondered how it is that it has never occurred to Russian journalists to dress up British news in the fashion in which Russian news is too often served to us. Allow me to give an example of the sensational messages with which they might have thrilled the Russian public, had they resorted to the methods of jaundiced journalism. To be read in ideal circumstances, you should be having buttered toast and coffee and carrying on a spasmodic conversation with several people at the same time.

My Slav Friends

KING GEORGE'S PRISONER.

THE REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND.

MME. PANKHURST IN PRISON.

CHURCHES IN FLAMES.

HEROIC WOMEN'S PALACE PLEA.

(From our own Correspondent).

London, Friday.

MME. PANKHURST is in the dreaded prison of Holloway. She was arrested at her residence yesterday evening by police armed with cudgels. A stroke of one of these deadly weapons will crack open a man's skull.

It is remarked that the Archbishop of Canterbury was at Buckingham Palace yesterday morning. His High Holiness was received by the King, who, as is well known, is a zealous adherent of the Dominating Church, which still persists in forcing women to take a mediæval vow of obedience to their husbands. The arrest of Mme. Pankhurst, as I have stated, took place in the evening.

The man, however, who is directly responsible for this new and amazing proof of the inability of a Capitalistic Government to understand the spirit of the nation, is M. Asquith. I am informed on excellent authority, but I accept no responsibility for the statement, that M. Burns, the People's Minister, made a touching plea for mercy at yesterday's meeting of the Council of Ministers. His appeal fell on deaf ears.

The blow, which it had been hoped would crush the spirit of the Reformers, has but strengthened their determination to win in the struggle for Freedom. A number of costly plate-glass windows were smashed in the Regentsky and Oxfordsky immediately the news of the arrest became known, and a number of ladies, many of them more familiar with the drawing-rooms of Mayfair, the aristocratic

quarter of the town, than with prison cells, were arrested by the police. This treatment of defenceless women is hailed with satisfaction by the Chauvinistic press, and the so-called Liberal press makes no protest.

My correspondents in the provinces inform me that the spirit of the Reformers remains undaunted. 72,947 roublesworth of plate glass has been destroyed in the last forty-eight hours. Churches are in flames. A bomb has been discovered under the episcopal throne of his Holiness Winnington in the Pavlovski Cathedral. The official residences of the Ministers are strongly guarded by police and the secret police (male and female) are displaying unusual activity. It is significant that Queen Alexandra did not go to Sandringham as arranged. Sinister rumours of a plot have led M. Asquith, on the advice of the secret police, to cancel an engagement to appear at a public reception. The art-collections are closed. It is now admitted that Princess Henry of Battenberg has gone to Spain. A number of Americans sailed to-day for New York. A state of great apprehension prevails. As a well-known foreign diplomat, whose name I am not at liberty to divulge, remarked to me this evening: it is impossible to forecast the future development of events.

I will not harrow the feelings of the Russian public by dwelling on the sufferings of Mme. Pankhurst and her fellow-sufferers. To the horrors of life in an English prison, where the victims of bourgeois parliamentaryism are not even allowed to purchase food or to smoke cigarettes, these delicately nurtured women are being daily tortured with diabolical instruments, especially made for the purpose, with the express sanction of the reactionary Minister of the Interior. So-called doctors have been hired by the authorities to act as torturers. The King and Queen were at the opera last night.

(*Later.*)

I have just heard from a personage moving in court circles that two ladies, in the midst of a brilliant function at the palace, pleaded with King

George with burning eloquence to have mercy on the tortured Martyrs of Liberty. They were conducted from the palace and so far have not been arrested. I have not yet been able to ascertain their names. Beautiful as they are noble, the action of the two Countesses is unsurpassed in pathos by any incident in the blood-stained history of revolutions. Their sublime conduct has touched a chord in the heart of the nation.

It will be noticed that the above tissue of calumny, innuendo and lies is mainly composed of the most harmless statements. A little twist to a sentence from a court circular and a princess's visit to the Continent becomes a terrified flight. The insertion of another sentence at the psychological point, without any twist at all, transforms it into a foul libel on the King and Queen. In the past there have been too many little twists and malicious sequences in the presentation of news from Russia to the British public. Since the beginning of the war there has been a tendency to fly to the other extreme. I have read telegrams from Petrograd which have been tainted by the sycophantic attitude of the correspondent to the great, and deprived of interest by his inability or neglect to throw any light on the questions of interior policy which the war has again brought into prominence. Friendship cannot be maintained without sincerity, and it is as important to the Russians as it is to us that, in the future, we should be supplied with an accurate account of events in the Russian empire and of its political life, whether gratifying or the reverse.

The public would undoubtedly be sometimes surprised, if the identity concealed by the words "Our own Correspondent" were revealed. While working in that capacity in Petrograd, I sometimes found that I had strange colleagues: the German correspondent of a German paper, who was also employed by a British newspaper; a Russian-German, whose career as a British journalist ended when he was exiled to Siberia for selling state secrets to a foreign power; and a Jewish revolutionary, delighted to fry his own fish over the fire kindly provided by a British editor. I might adduce other instances of the kind which came to my notice when working in Berlin. The most extravagant case of all, however, was that of the Varshava[1] correspondent of an important London newspaper, a Polish Jew, who had at one time combined his journalistic duties with those of the porter of an hotel. No doubt these gentlemen supplied a service of news which satisfied the editors who employed them, but it may be doubted whether their efforts tended to the development of friendship between the Russian and British peoples. The public depends almost entirely on the press for its knowledge of foreign affairs and has a right to know who provide them with information from foreign capitals. The French custom of printing telegrams from abroad above the signatures of the men who send them has been

[1] The ugly name, Warsaw, derived from the uglier German word Warschau, is not employed in this book. Varshava, the Polish and Russian name of the Polish capital, is used instead.

adopted by some of our newspapers since the beginning of the war. It is to be hoped that this plan will be maintained. When I read a message from Petrograd signed by Dr. Williams, the author of *Russia of the Russians*, a book which I venture to think is the best and most accurate of modern works on Russia, or by such experienced journalists as Mr. Frederick Rennet or Mr. Wilcox, I know that I am receiving information on which I can rely. Experience has taught me to regard the unsigned messages in certain newspapers with suspicion.

One of the sources from which Englishmen have derived their ideas about Russia has been the novel of Russian life, written by an Englishman who has never been in Russia. I once met the author of a novel of this kind, which I have not had the advantage of reading, and I asked him how he had managed to give the proper atmosphere to his book and the local colour.

"Local colour!" he cried, laughing. "I thought it would ruin the whole business if I once began to study the subject, so I left the atmosphere and the local colour to take care of themselves. But I assure you it was the real thing—snow, wolves, beautiful princesses, troikas, brutal Cossacks, noble revolutionaries, wicked officials, and the horrors of exile in Siberia—and it was a howling success."

I shall probably read the book one day and enjoy it immensely, just as I enjoy a performance of *The Mikado;* and the charm of the novel for

me, like that of the opera, will lie partly in the picture of a land that never existed inhabited by fantastically impossible people. Unfortunately such books have coloured many people's ideas about Russia. From them, I think, is derived the common error that Russian society is extravagantly brilliant, whereas it is far less glittering than that of London. And those figures of melodrama, entirely good or entirely bad, with which some suppose Russia to be populated, are only to be found between the covers of foreign works of fiction.

It must, however, be confessed that books purporting to give reliable information about Russia, works written in the interests of the revolutionary cause or simply to suit the public taste, have had a more disastrous influence than sensational fiction on our ideas of the Russian people. These books often contain a great deal of important information, but the atmosphere, created by partisanship or the desire to pander to the taste of the public, makes them valueless to anybody who is not able to detect their tendencious character. I cannot refrain from alluding to a calumny on Petrograd society, which I have already dealt with in another book. I refer to it again, because it is an excellent example of the monstrous perversions of the truth which have been foisted on us. The calumny was contained in the opening chapter of a sensational book about Russia. The author described a murder in a fashionable Petrograd restaurant, and, at the outset of his book, gave the impression that

Russians are utterly callous by declaring that those Russian men and women went on eating and drinking and listening to many a merry cake-walk, while all the time the corpse of the murdered man lay in their midst. I was in the restaurant when the murder took place. A number of ladies fainted and most of the people went home as quickly as they could. The musicians fled and did not return. To belabour such books now is to beat a dead horse. Their day is done and British readers are no longer disposed to accept the picture of Russian life they give. We know little enough about the Russians, but our present fellowship with them has made it clear to us that in the past caricatures have often been palmed off for portraits.

In our generation Mr. Maurice Baring has been the pioneer to go into the Russian land and come back to tell us the truth. One may sometimes question his conclusions or dispute his judgment, but the candour and the charm of his writing has given us glimpses of the Russian land and the Russian people as they are, and made us see that we had been deceived in the past. We owe him a great debt.

At the present time there appears to be a tendency to show Russia in a pink light. After listening to a fascinating lecture about an idealized Russia one night, not long ago, I began to wonder whether Russians were being shown an idealized England. I imagined a lecturer talking to a Moscow audience like this—

In England the shops are closed on Sundays. The English do not wish to buy and sell on Sunday; they wish to pray. On the windows of their churches are painted figures of the saints. The English like to feel that they are surrounded by the saints when they are in church. And I cannot help feeling that it is the saints that glow in the windows of the English churches that have made England the land of self-sacrifice.

I remember once being in London and crossing the Waterloo Bridge. A young soldier, one of the heroic British soldiers, passed in front of me and I saw a woman-of-the-people touch his arm and stop him, a motherly soul, wearing the national headdress adorned with ostrich feathers, splashes of ruby and emerald against the murk of a London sky. And as I passed the two, I saw her slip something into the boy's hand and heard her say: "Here, my lad, go and get yourself two penn'orth of gin."

Twopence! eight kopecks! a great sum for a poor woman to give to a stranger, money she could ill afford. And I said to myself: yes, it is true, England is the home of self-sacrifice.

And supposing, I may say *per impossibile*, for the Russians are sensible people, that the Muscovites are being told such tendencious stuff, what a dreadful shock they will receive when they come to England and find out what we are really like!

It is because I cannot help loving Russia, because I have always a longing to go back to Russia,

perhaps because I know the fascination of the faults of the Russians as well as their good qualities, that I am almost as vexed when I see a pink light thrown on the Russian land as I used to be when the light was red. And the Russians themselves are not gratified by praise of this sort; on the contrary, they are apt to resent an attempt to idealize them. A short time ago one of the most important organs of the Petrograd press devoted a leading article to the pretty things that are being said in England about the Russians. The writer was very angry. There is praise and praise, he said, and pointed out that to harp perpetually on their spirit of self-sacrifice and so forth, qualities which are primarily due to nature (I think he was wrong there), is to imply that they have done nothing of themselves for which they deserve credit. He declared that such praise became in the end something like insult, and maintained that we should be better advised to dwell on the attainments of the Russians in science and the arts, and on the rapidity of their political progress, than on the charm of their natural qualities.

We and the Russians are friends. We want our friendship to be lasting. And our hopes and their hopes can only be fulfilled if the device of our friendship be Truth.

CHAPTER V

At the beginning of this book I told a tale of an icon in a coach with four horses and postillions in the imperial livery; for it seemed to me that no incident of Russian life was more characteristic than that pompous arrival of a picture of the Sorrowful Face of Christ at the opening of a parliament, and none more likely to indicate the necessity of using any means that might present themselves of explaining the point-of-view of those who manifest their deepest feelings by practices that are so strange to us. Allow me to return to the icon in a coach and the ceremonies, or mummeries, as many persons would call them, connected with it.

It is easy to dismiss such manifestations of religious feeling in a glib phrase, to call them superstitious or mediæval or sentimental or even noxious, to say that it is foolishness to provide a coach for a picture and to hold up infants to kiss it, or, with an air of intellectual superiority, to express the hope that education and enlightenment will not destroy customs that are both touching and picturesque. But neither denunciation nor scorn nor obliging indulgence afford an explanation of the attachment shown by the cultured, as well as by the unlettered, to these

THE GATE OF THE RESURRECTION.

practices; and those who hold such language are never likely to understand the Russian people. They may read Russian books, they may have Russian acquaintances, they may even live in Russia; but they are bound to be often at a loss to account for the behaviour of the fictitious characters, presented to them in literature, or of the men and women they know and believe to be exactly like themselves, until some crisis reveals the difference between an Anglo-Saxon and a Slav. On the other hand, a just appreciation of the significance of a kiss, imprinted on a blackened picture, may serve to explain conduct that would be otherwise enigmatic. It may be needed to elucidate the character of a man who boasts that he is an infidel, to show the reason of a ballerina's refusal to dance in the Argentine, as well as to unlock the secret of a recluse or of a peasant who tramps through Russia to collect farthings for the purchase of a church-bell.

Carrying icons about in coaches may be a corrupt following of the Apostles. With that I am not concerned. It is more to the point that the practice is the result of acquiescence in apostolic doctrines. So long as there are lovers, and mothers and children, in the world, evidence will not be wanting that our most ridiculous actions are the result of our profoundest feelings. The conviction that the gospels teach a divine philosophy of life is the cause, and at the same time the defence, of practices that may appear childish to the stranger from a land where faith

is cold. Imbued with a belief in the majesty of self-sacrifice, the Russian nation shows its veneration for the chief exemplar of abnegation and proclaims its desire to imitate Him by means that the divine foolishness of love alone could devise. The Greeks carried burning torches before the victors in the public games, and the Russian celebrates the victory of the spirit over the flesh by lighting tapers before a picture of Christ. He kisses an icon, or the book of the gospels after evening prayers, as the lover kisses the miniature or the letters of the beloved. Customs that are the outcome of faith become its protectors, and practices that spring from a theory of human perfection sustain and spread it. Since the Christians emerged from the concealment of the Roman catacombs, they have unconsciously become the supreme advertisers and, with an ingenuity that men of business cannot surpass and must surely envy, have forced on the attention of the world the remedy for the ills of mankind they claim to possess and offer to give without money and without price. To this end they have used the scholar and the poet, the architect and the painter, the musician and the histrion, and have engaged in their enterprise all manner of traders and artificers: workers in metal, weavers of tissue, jewellers, embroideresses, fishers of pearls, trappers of ermine, merchants of spices. What is the papal pageant of a canonization but a superb advertisement of the splendour of abnegation?

When the teaching of Rome was rejected by the English in favour of that of Augsburg and Germany became their spiritual home, religious advertisement was severely curtailed, with a result that warrants the assumption that the Archbishop of Canterbury could, if he chose, give valuable corroboration to the common opinion of business men that a lavish scheme of advertising is required to secure and to retain the patronage of the public. In the Baltic provinces and Finland, where the German doctrines of religion were preached and generally accepted in the sixteenth century, a parsimonious policy has been introduced into this sphere of religious activity. The sight of church spires, the sound of church bells, are the only appeals religion makes to those who do not come within earshot of the pulpits. In the rest of the Russian empire the ancient policy of the Christians has been adhered to. Above the cities of Muscovy shine the domes of many churches, golden, apple-green, azure, milk-white. They are surmounted by innumerable crosses that are golden in the sunlight and become silver when the moon shines. From time to time the domes are painted, the stars with which they are powdered and the thin crosses above them gilded, and the walls that support them smeared with whitewash. Hence one is sometimes surprised to learn that a church, which looks new and unharmed by the elements, was built when Novgorod was a flourishing republic and Moscow was paying tribute to the

Golden Horde. Time enhances the beauty of the churches of Western Christendom more skilfully than painters and gilders. Their weather-beaten walls are witnesses to the ideas that ruled the lives of men and women who believed that the sun went round the earth and expected that the philosopher's stone would one day be found in the crucible of an alchemist. On the mellow brick and yellowed stone may be deciphered messages from the dead to the living, from the ignorant to the illuminated, according to one man; from the wise to the foolish, from the humble to the proud, in the opinion of another. Easy fancy replaces the sparse and decorous congregation before the altar of Canterbury with a host of pilgrims, and sees the black-robed monks in the aisles of Durham. Knowledge and an effort of mind are required to persuade one that the ancient churches of Russia have anything to do with the past. Deprived of the attributes of antiquity, they do not suggest a comparison between bygone ardour and present coldness, but turn men's thoughts to the living power of the cross and its dominion over men and women, whose soldiers fight battles in the air, whose surgeons have X-ray cabinets, and whose shrines glitter with light derived from dynamos.

The architecture and the freshness of the churches arrest the attention of the foreigner in Russia, but nothing is likely to strike him as stranger or more characteristic of the country than the innumerable icons he sees in the streets

and in domestic and public buildings. He may miss the sight of an icon driving out in a coach, but he is bound to see pictures of Christ and the Virgin and the saints at every turn. The appearance of these icons is singular. They are usually painted on board, but the greater part of the painting is concealed by an encasement of silver or gilded metal, in which are apertures to display the face and hands of the figure beneath. The lines of a robe are often indicated on the metal covering in repoussé work and the head of the figure is usually surrounded by a halo, or surmounted with a crown, of filagree. There are millions of these icons in Russia. The churches are filled with them. The wayfarer sees the yellow light of the candles burning before them through the open doors of little chapels, built outside the great churches or apart in the streets and squares of the cities where the concourse of people is greatest. At night the tiny flame of a wick, floating in a crimson or amethyst cup of oil, casts a flickering gleam of light on an icon affixed to the wall of a house or shop. I have seen an enormous icon in the booking-office of a railway terminus illuminated on a festival with a brilliant wreath of electric lamps. There are icons in the bedrooms and parlours of private houses and hotels, in restaurants and tea-houses, in shops and the foyers of theatres, in post-offices, public baths, clubs, counting-houses, police-stations, courts of justice, in the palace and the parliament-house and the gloomy chambers of

ministries. And one would as soon expect to find a peasant's cottage without a stove as without half a dozen oleographic icons, encased in metal that glitters when the little lamp before them is lit on festivals. Russians live beneath the gaze of a cloud of witnesses, who look down at them tranquilly from their silver shrines.

"What is this?" I said to a friend, pointing to the icon in his study. "You, with your profession of agnosticism, keep that in your room?"

"It is a family icon," he said.

In Russia neither good nor bad, neither believer nor infidel, can hide from the benignant glance or silent rebuke of the saints, from the most pitiful eyes of the Virgin, from the sorrowful countenance of the clement Judge of men.

Not content with decorating their land with sacred pictures, the Russians set forth their faith before all the world, and proclaim publicly their admiration for the chief exemplars of the virtues it enjoins, by giving icons to one another on solemn occasions and by venerating them in the manner tradition prescribes. The Tsar, as we have seen, provides a coach for the imperial icon. When he arrives in Moscow, custom requires him to leave his carriage at the entrance to the Red Place, in order to pray before the ancient icon of the Iberian Mother of God, that is kept in the shrine built against the middle pier of the two-fold Gateway of the Resurrection. It would be counted a scandal for him to enter the Kremlin without performing this duty. Deputations of

nobles or merchants or peasants wait upon him and, before withdrawing, ask him to be pleased to receive a gift of icons. The Tsaritsa distributes little icons to the wounded soldiers she comforts in the hospitals. And when the Grand Duchess Elizabeth became a religious, the prelate who received her vows blessed her with icons of St. Alexandra and St. Nicholas, sent for the purpose by her sister, the Tsaritsa, and by the Tsar.

There is nothing singular in these manifestations of imperial devotion. What pious Russian visits Moscow without hastening to salute the picture of the Virgin and her divine Child in the Iberian chapel? What gentleman, what merchant, what labouring man, passes the shrine without uncovering? Moscow was shaken to its foundations, a few years ago, when it heard that His Most High Holiness the Metropolitan Vladimir intended to pull down the beloved chapel in order to build another in a better style of architecture. Nothing else was talked about. The newspapers published columns on the subject. Mr. Goutchkov, the mayor, once president of the Imperial Duma, was besieged by visitors of every quality, who came to implore him to prevent the destruction of the shrine. Old men, he reported, besought him, with tears streaming down their faces, to avert the calamity that threatened the city and to preserve to their children and grandchildren the place in which their forefathers before them had done reverence to the icon set up by the Tsar Alexis Mikhailo-

vitch. All day long people were telephoning to him to know if the dreadful news was true and to beg his intervention. He was obliged to go post haste to Petrograd, where he told the authorities that he could not be responsible for order in the city if the project were persisted in, and pointed out that it could not be executed unless the workmen employed were protected from the anger of the citizens by soldiers. These representations were effective, and Moscow learnt with relief that the home of the Iberian Virgin was not to be violated.

Late one night, I was walking in the streets of that city with a friend, an unbaptized Jew, when the great coach of an icon rumbled past us. The Jew took off his hat. I knew him well enough to ask his reason for paying reverence to a Christian picture.

"It is the custom," he said. "One does not like to be singular."

And as Moscow proudly claims to be the third Rome, he had a considerable body of opinion to sanction his behaviour. In Russia custom makes even the unbelievers agents for the propagation of the gospel.

Besides honouring icons by bowing to them, or uncovering before them, the Russians are accustomed to place lights before them. Anna Ivanovna had a candle set up before the picture of the Face of Christ, when she took me to the house of Peter the Great. My cook used to light a lamp before the shining icons in her kitchen

on festivals. There is usually a counter in a Russian church, at which worshippers can buy candles. The demand for them on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings is so great that the Holy Synod, which enjoys a monopoly of the manufacture of wax candles, makes a large profit from their sale. An Englishman, attending divine service in Russia for the first time, was surprised to find that the people packed behind him kept tapping him on the shoulder with wax candles, which they seemed anxious that he should accept. He took them in the spirit in which he believed them to be offered and accumulated half a dozen. The poor, ignorant man did not know that the Holy Council of Nicæa in the year 787 instructed Christian people to burn candles before the pictures of Christ and the saints, an order which any Russian school-miss might be expected to explain in an examination in elementary religious knowledge. His bewilderment grew as his collection of candles increased, until a neighbour saved him from an embarrassing position by taking them and passing them to people in front, who, in their turn, sent them on their way to expire in honour of St. Nicholas.

Tapers in the churches, lamps before the icons in the streets, are beacons lit to guide the wayfarer into the paths of self-sacrifice and pity. The taper a superstitious peasant sets before the icon of the Sorrowful Face of Christ, in expectation of a rapid miracle, may light the way of another up the mount of perfection.

"Do English ladies always cross themselves when they pass churches?" asked an old Polish lady, who spoke English perfectly and knew as much about England as most of us do about Poland.

I said they never did. She looked a trifle shocked, pulled herself together quickly, and said politely that English ladies were doubtless very good and that everybody knew they were not demonstrative.

In Poland and Russia people are demonstrative. The man-about-Varshava takes off his hat as he passes a church on the way to the opera. And the woman of fashion crosses herself as she is whirled through the streets to a ball. There are four hundred and fifty churches in Moscow, numbers of chapels and countless shrines, and cabmen seem to be perpetually crossing themselves. The Petrograd cabmen are less pious, but one of them nearly tipped me out of a cab on the crowded Nicholas Bridge by letting his horse go as it liked, while he himself was absorbed in making a series of signs of the cross in honour of the icon whose shrine we were passing.

"At every journey and movement, at every coming in and going out, at the putting on of our clothes and shoes, at baths, at meals, at lighting of candles, at going to bed, at sitting down, whatever occupation employs us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross," wrote Tertullian of his contemporaries. The words might be applied almost literally to modern

Russians. None but a pedant would object that the Carthaginian's second-century Christians made a little cross on their foreheads, whereas the Russians adopt a custom, that was new-fangled in the sixth century, and make a sweeping sign of the cross from the forehead to the breast and from the right shoulder to the left. In the churches people cross themselves often during divine service, at such times as private devotion suggests. Passengers in a tramcar sign themselves when it starts. Railway travellers behave in the same manner. The stranger is surprised to see that the people leaving their houses in the early morning to go to market or to work usually cross themselves. I have seen a young man, who might have been a shop-assistant or a clerk from a counting-house, stand to pray before an icon in the street and cross himself many times. The gesture is so ordinary that when the great revolutionary, Catharine Breshkovsky, desired to hoodwink a policeman, who was charged with the duty of arresting her at a railway-station, she crossed herself time after time before the icon in the booking-office, and thus escaped detection. No incident could be more characteristic of the holy Russian land.

Whether Canterbury be right in stigmatizing the veneration of images as a vain thing, fondly invented, and in formally prohibiting a bishop from making the sign of the cross in giving a public blessing, or Moscow be blameless in upholding and enjoining these practices, are ques-

tions that must be left to those who are competent to discuss them. The prevalence of these customs in Russia has been emphasized in order to show the pressure of the ideas, of which they are the symbols, on the Russian mind. It may be argued that they are salutary and edifying, or, on the other hand, superstitious and even idolatrous; but those who condemn will not look less sharply than those who approve for evidence of the realization of the ideas these usages embody in the life of the nation that adopts them. People who bring a picture of Christ crowned with thorns to the opening of parliament, who kiss the Sacred Face and teach their children to do likewise, who make their land a vast shrine, filled with pictures of the saints and radiant with the light of the tapers that burn before them, invite the scrutiny of their neighbours. We have a right to expect self-sacrifice and pity from those who are at such pains to extol these virtues. Are the Russians imbued with these qualities, or is their elaborate display of admiration for them hollow and hypocritical? Are their beautiful and eloquent gestures, with fire and perfumes and jewels and branches of greenery, traditional formalities, unrelated to life, or are they the inevitable outcome of the temper of the nation? Is the spirit of the gospels choked or encouraged by the devices the Byzantine empire bequeathed to Russia? To answer such questions categorically would be unsatisfactory and savour of impertinence. If the writer has

already indicated the nature of the answers he would be obliged to give, were he bound to speak, the tales of Russian life told in the following chapter may afford him some excuse, and the observations recorded and incidents adduced may justify any prejudice he has unwittingly displayed.

CHAPTER VI

MARTHA is an old woman, who lives in a lonely village. Her home is a wooden house, containing a living-room, a barn, and a stable. She is unlettered; for she has never had time to learn to read. All her life she has worked hard. As a child, she helped her parents to till the fields in summer; and in winter she fetched water for the household and the cattle from the river. Across the snow she went, with a light yoke on her shoulders from which two buckets were suspended, to the frozen river, and lowered her pails into the running water through a hole in the ice. Her husband married her because she was strong. She kept his house, bore him children, toiled in the fields, wove linen for the garments of the family. She bears in her body the marks of toil; her face is wrinkled, her hands gnarled, her back bent. All the science she knows has been taught her by the winds and the snows, the sun and the moon. The church has been her mistress in the arts. A pilgrimage to a distant monastery is her most precious memory.

On the sixteenth day of December in the first year of the great war, Martha undertook a journey to the city of Vladimir and came to the palace of Alexis, the Archbishop. She wore a sheepskin coat, top-boots of felt, and had a drab shawl tied

MAKING THE SAMOVAR DRAW.

round her head. The servants of the Archbishop did not wish to admit her, thinking, very likely, that she had come to beg. She refused to go away, and importuned the servants until they let her enter.

"Will you be the Archbishop?" she asked, when she found herself in the presence of a bearded monk in a black robe and a cylindrical headdress, covered with a long black veil.

"Yes, I," replied his Holiness, blessing her with the sign of the cross.

She bowed before him and kissed his hand, and she crossed herself several times.

"Well, then, you see it's like this," she said; "our Little Father Tsar is fighting now with the Germans. He has many needs of all sorts and they're not to be counted. Well, then, I've brought money, in order that you may send it to the Tsar."

She took out of her pocket a packet of paper money, done up in a handkerchief, and gave the Archbishop fifty guineas.

"Five hundred roubles!" exclaimed the prelate, more than a little taken aback. "Where did you get them from?"

"All my life, little Father, scraped and got together. And now the great need of the Tsar. So then the Lord ordered me to give them up for a good work. Just got them out of the bank."

"And you, old woman, what have you left for yourself?" asked the Archbishop.

"Eh! I don't need much. Heat the stove myself, bake something, and satisfied."

"And your burial?"

"Something remains to me for death," she said, and bowed herself to receive a parting blessing from the reluctant Archbishop.

And to attest the authenticity of my tale, let me add that you can find Martha at Andarov, in the Tcherkutinsky hundred of the county and government of Vladimir, some hundred and twenty miles east of Moscow. Ask for Martha, daughter of Dmitri, and if you have any difficulty, which I do not anticipate, mention that her surname is Pantelyéeva. But, even if you go to the ancient and glorious city of Vladimir, I shall not be surprised if you do not take the trouble to go into the country in quest of Martha; for, as you may justly point out, she is merely an ugly old woman, who made an act of self-sacrifice that in these days, when love grows wild on battlefields and blossoms in the breath of Mars, can be paralleled in almost any country of Europe. You may indeed tell me of an old woman in an English village, or a French village, whose charity was as great as Martha's. And even should you do so, I shall not regret telling her tale; for it has the merit of showing that an ignorant old Russian woman may have a heart. And to show that is in itself a useful performance. It must, however, be admitted that deeds of self-sacrifice, which would have been notable a year ago, are commonplace now. Let us turn, then, from the ordinary tale of Martha

to the extraordinary one of Alexandra. It was told me by Anna Ivanovna, who took me to prayers in the house of Peter the Great, as I have already narrated.

Anna is the daughter of a priest and her husband is the master of a choir, renowned for the beauty with which it sings the services of the church. They move in cathedral circles; but they also enjoy the society and esteem of several gentlemen and their wives. This secular influence has broadened Anna's views. The cathedral dignitaries and their wives consider it improper for a woman who has a family to wear dresses of a bright colour and fashionable hats. Those of them who were in Anna's parlour, when an elderly Scotchwoman sat down to the piano and sang "Annie Laurie" in a pleasing manner, expressed the opinion that her behaviour was ridiculous and also improper. Anna told me secretly that she admired the spirit of the Scotchwoman and saw no reason why any woman should not have pretty clothes. But she does not care to risk offending the wives of archdeacons and archpriests and, as she is thirty-eight and a grandmother, dresses with great sobriety. It has probably never occurred to her that she could have distracting clothes; and this is fortunate, for simplicity suits her girlish figure and delicate, rather pale and rather serious, face.

"I am glad you have come," she said, when I called on her one afternoon. "I want somebody to talk to. I have lost the children."

"How careless of you," I said.

"It was not my fault," she said. "They were taken away from me yesterday."

I pointed out that, as her son is a strapping boy of eighteen and her daughter a strong-minded young woman with a husband, the abduction must have been difficult.

"I'm not talking about my children," she said, laughing, "but about the other children. And now I come to think of it, you don't know anything about them, because you haven't been here for more than a fortnight. You remember Constantine Ivanitch? He went to the cathedral with us on Easter eve."

"A General?"

"Yes," she said. "Well, he brought his children here a fortnight ago, and asked me to take care of them. You see his wife has left him."

"With whom?" I asked.

"But with nobody," said Anna. "She has gone away by herself and is living in a garret—and she had such a beautiful home. The drawing-room was hung with pale green brocade."

"Her husband looked a kind man," I observed.

"It's not that," said Anna. "Constantine Ivanitch is one of the best men I know. I don't believe he's had a single love affair since his marriage; that in itself is extraordinary."

"Is his wife such a terrible person then?"

"But no," cried Anna. "Alexandra Feordorovna is a real beauty. But you know what our Russian men are, and I suppose Englishmen are

the same. They require variety; it's in their nature and there's nothing to be done. But Constantine Ivanitch adored his wife. He cried when he brought the children here. Poor man! I was so sorry for him. Alexandra Feordorovna has gone away to give herself to God. She wishes to live an unworldly life. I suppose she wants to be like the people we call heroic, people who wear chains under their clothes, you know, or like St. Simeon, who lived on the top of a pillar. It is very beautiful."

There was not a trace of irony in Anna's voice; on the contrary, she spoke with conviction. I had only to look into her grey eyes to see that her opinion of the proceedings she described was sincere.

" Alexandra Feordorovna has lived severely for the last two years," she continued. " She always wore a black dress, a perfectly shapeless dress, and a black shawl over her head, like a nun. Occasionally she would put on a nice dress, when they received guests, because her husband would beg her to do so. He is very fond of entertaining. But at a dinner-party she would sit at the head of the table and eat a raw herring and black bread, while every one else was having all sorts of nice dishes. They had an excellent cook. And she drank nothing but water. And now she has gone away to lead a perfect life. Constantine Ivanitch had nobody to look after the children, so he brought them here. Such nice children! The boy is ten and the girl eleven. They were quite good,

but they were always asking when they could go to their mother. The father is exceedingly fond of them and he did his best to make them contented. He is a very busy man, but he came to see them nearly every day. And he always brought them presents, chocolates and the most beautiful toys. But they didn't seem to take any interest in the toys, and the first thing they always asked him was when were they going to see their mother. And they cried for her. That upset him very much. He used to try and get them to play. One morning he brought in a beautiful mechanical train—he must have given I don't know what for it—and he made it go all over the floor. They were quite excited for a little while, and then suddenly ceased to take any interest in it, burst out crying, and said they wanted their mother. It was most distressing. I couldn't help crying myself. And then, less than a week ago, their aunt, Alexandra Feordorovna's sister, came and said she had come to take them to their mother. They were in the room when she arrived, and were wild with delight; but I refused to let them go, and the aunt, a most disagreeable woman, had to leave without them. I had a dreadful time with them when she had gone. She came back the next day and said that legal proceedings were going to be taken against me for unlawfully keeping children from their mother and that it was a very serious offence. She was so rude that I had to get my husband to come in to talk with her. He let her have her way. He always says it is unwise to interfere in

other people's affairs. So she took them away. I have been to see them. They are living with their mother in an attic in the Kazansky. The place was almost bare and they sleep on mattresses on the floor. They were drinking tea and eating black bread without any butter when I went in. And they seemed perfectly happy, merry, and not the least like what they were when they were here. I think holy people attract children. Alexandra Feordorovna told me that she desired them to learn to be unworldly, in order that they may be happy. She is giving them lessons, but they spend a considerable part of the day in prayer. She said it was beautiful to see the devotion with which they bow and cross themselves while she reads the office."

A few months later Anna gave me another chapter of the history of Alexandra Feordorovna and her children.

"Constantine Ivanitch wanted to send the boy to one of the privileged schools for nobles," she said; "but the mother would not permit it. She has sent him to be a chorister at the Kazan Cathedral, just as if he were a common boy. She said it was better for him to sing the praises of the Virgin all day than to be in the *Corps des Pages*. And she has sent her daughter to live in a school kept by nuns. It is two hundred versts from Petrograd, and when she wanted to visit the child she went all the way on foot. She will not take any money from her husband for herself, so she could not go by train, even if she had wanted to. When she

told me about this, I asked her how she had managed. 'The peasants on the way were good to me,' she said; 'they gave me food and a place to sleep in.' And she walked all the way back. It is very beautiful; but sometimes I think it would be better if the children could be brought up differently."

I told her that the wish did her credit.

"No," she said, "it only shows that I am worldly. I have not the heavenly mind of Alexandra Feordorovna."

I did not challenge Anna's estimate of conduct that appeared to me monstrous; for I realized that between us was a barrier that neither of us could scale. She was a Russian; I was an Englishman. Her thoughts were those of Eastern Christendom; mine those of the West. She belonged to a race whose character has been moulded and point of view defined by different forces from those deployed on Western nations. To her the savage asceticism of the pillar saints was praiseworthy and, moreover, comprehensible. I know too little about the soul of man to allow myself to echo the words in which the historian professed his contempt and pity for St. Simeon Stylites and his companions; but I am conscious that I lack the faculty, possessed by Anna in common with multitudes of Russians, to appreciate their voluntary martyrdom. The West once felt the spell of the East, and the names of some of the most extravagant of Eastern ascetics appear in Western calenders; but the Latin clergy ignore them and

are accustomed, if questioned, to state that the lives of these saints are proposed to the admiration of the faithful and not for their imitation. The flight of Alexandra Feordorovna, which a Russian thought sublime, recalls that of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, an act of renunciation excused, rather than admired, by the Catholics on the ground that the saintly Landgravine nursed the sick, gave alms to the poor, and thwarted avaricious merchants who sought, in time of famine, to make a corner in wheat In Western Christendom the justification of extraordinary asceticism is success. The Christians of the East, less practical, do not require to see the fruit of singular piety in order to revere it. Six thousand soldiers and a host of notable persons translated the bones of St. Simeon Stylites from the mountain of Telenissa to Antioch, where they were long held to be the most splendid possession of the city. The reigning Emperor of Russia and his subjects go on pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Seraphim, a modern ascetic, whose austerities, if less terrible, yielded no richer harvest than those of the Stylite. This popular saint hid himself in the recesses of a forest and for thirty years did not utter a word. A few disciples gathered round him to learn his heavenly lore. The country-people sought his prayers and his counsel. He made no novel appeal to his age, nor did he, like Benedict or Loyola, initiate a movement which should spread his fame and justify in the eyes of future generations piety that might seem extravagant. A monastery, erected by his disciples in

the place where he spent his years in prayer and penance, is the meagre monument of his austerities. To the Russian, St. Seraphim's life is its own justification, and his renunciation of the common and legitimate joys of mankind a sufficient claim to admiration. His portrait decorates the palace and the peasant's hut. There is one in Anna's parlour; perhaps it was in the contemplation of the face of the silent saint that she learnt to appreciate the spirit of Alexandra Feordorovna's self-sacrifice. And I, not having been trained by my pastors and masters in the veneration of either St. Seraphim or St. Simeon Stylites, have an inclination to melancholy when I think of that religious woman and her children.

Allow me, by way of relief, to present you to a charming ballerina, Mme. Geltzer, our dear Yekaterina Feofdorovna, as people say in Moscow, where she has no rival on the stage of the imperial theatre. It is possible that you already know her; for she danced in a ballet at the Empire and the balletomaniacs were of opinion that no dancer who has come to us from Russia has surpassed her either in fascination or technique. One day, when she was in London, I went into her drawing-room, just as a man of oily appearance and oily manner was leaving her.

"That," she said, as he disappeared, "is the tempter."

"I shouldn't think the temptation will be very hard to resist," I suggested.

"But it is rather hard," she said, laughing.

"He offers me simply thousands and thousands of dollars to go and dance in America. He wants to shoot me across America in a special train, and every night he will whirl me in a motor from the train to the theatre in which I am to dance, back to the train after the performance to rush through the night to another city. It's a nightmare. I said to him: 'Do you take me for an artist or a machine?' But still it is a temptation. It would be very nice to have thousands and thousands of dollars. I should buy such a lot of hats. Shall I go or shall I not?"

It was obviously not a matter that I could decide, and I said nothing. As for Yekaterina Feordorovna, she leant back in her chair and forgot me entirely for two long minutes. Then she suddenly sprang up.

"I will not go," she cried with enormous determination. "Do you understand, Alfred Feordorovitch"—that is the name my Russian friends give me—"do you understand that I am going to create a new part in a ballet in Moscow? I think of the Great Theatre at the first performance, with all the critics and artists and literary men there, all the people who have followed my career since I was a child and watched the development of my art. I think of all that. I tell you, to please that audience is more to me, far more, than all the money the Americans can give me. Let them keep their dollars."

And she did not go.

Mme. Geltzer's sacrifice of money in the interests

of art was less remarkable than the demands made of her by the Russian public. A musical comedy actress of New York or London would be insulted and possibly burst into tears, were she offered the modest salary paid by the directors of the Russian imperial theatres to ballerini and actresses, whose names are famous throughout the empire and sometimes beyond its borders. Russians do not expect an artist to use her talents in order to make a fortune; they require of her gravity of behaviour and a spiritual attitude towards her art.

"She wants too much from life," said a Russian to me rather sadly of one of his fellow-countrywomen, who was earning the salary of an ambassador by performing in foreign theatres. "She may be making a fortune, but her art is deteriorating."

Moscow looks for self-sacrifice in a ballerina and is shocked if she displays a lack of seriousness or a tendency to frivolity.

"What would they say in Moscow, if I really did go to America?" said Mme. Geltzer on that afternoon when Apollo triumphed over Pluto. "As it is, they will look at me very suspiciously, when I make my *rentrée* at the Great Theatre. 'She has been dancing in England to get money,' they will say; 'her art is bound to have suffered.' You know they are a little unhappy about me, because I wear pretty hats. In Moscow people think that an artist should have the most beautiful things in the world, when they are necessary for the part she has to play on the stage; but they

consider she should not trouble about the fashions in real life. If she does, they jump to the conclusion that she is not serious about her art. And I simply love pretty hats. I can't help it, and I've bought six new ones in Paris and, whatever anybody says, I am going to wear them when I get back to Moscow."

I remember she was wearing a particularly fetching one at the time, with about eleven ostrich feathers on it, and as she talked and the feathers nodded above her pretty face, I began to feel positively hostile to the people of Moscow. What happened when she displayed it in the streets of that city of domes and shrines and holy effigies I do not know. The coquetry of that hat deserved the tribute of a sympathetic glance, but the Muscovites are queer people, and possibly frowned. Anything may be expected of people who consider the highest compliment they can pay to a theatrical company is to call its members the Martyrs of Art. This is the title conferred on the actors and actresses of the Moscow Artistic Theatre by a grateful and affectionate public. The Martyrs work exceedingly hard for contemptible salaries and cheerfully sacrifice their financial interests to those of their art, because they know that, were the actors better paid, the directors of the theatre would be unable to expend the large sums necessary for the perfect production of several new plays each season. That they make light of their devotion may be understood from the comments they made on a newspaper article I wrote about

their performance of *The Blue Bird*, a piece which all Moscow saw and talked about long before it was acted in the theatres of Western Europe. Thinking the matter of interest to British players and playgoers, I mentioned the salaries paid to one or two of the chief performers. A friend of mine showed some of them the article. They were pleased with the praise it had been a duty to bestow; but the paragraph about finance puzzled them. "Why does he speak about our salaries?" they asked my friend. "What interest can that be to the English? What interest can it be to anybody?" And in those naïve questions they displayed the spirit that Russians expect to find in men and women engaged in artistic and intellectual pursuits.

I once skimmed a book on the profession of letters, written by a successful British novelist. It contained advice on the acquisition of technique, the study of grammar, the use of dictionaries and books of synonyms, and a considerable section was devoted to the purely business side of the profession. The author stated the income which a writer should be able to make by an annual output of two of the sort of books that publishers describe as general literature. He was, however, at pains to point out that it is more lucrative to write novels, and the yearly sum to be derived from this industry by a man who can hit the public taste, at the rate of two thousand words a day, was discussed. If my memory serves me, the man of letters was forbidden to value his time at less than

ten shillings an hour. No silly pacing up and down in search of the just word that eludes him! No dallying with phrases and fiddling efforts to poise his sentences gracefully! His business is to make ten shillingsworth of literature per hour. Indeed, this guide to the career of letters might be taken as a model by any butcher or baker or candlestick-maker, who is thinking of writing a manual for the instruction of youths about to enter one of these trades.

It is to be hoped that this book will not be read by Russians. It would shock them profoundly. Thousands of them, even when they cannot speak English, know one English phrase: "Time is Money." They believe it to be the phrase that is most characteristic of the British people; but when they quote it at one, it is evident that they are almost as much amused by it as by the one other phrase of our language they have mastered, namely, "Kiss me Quick." They do not disapprove of our energy in business, but the idea of a city man, who leaves his home in time to catch the 8.15 and leaves his work in time to eat at seven and sleep at ten, makes them shudder. They may profess admiration for this strenuous devotion, although their praise is of the nature of a philosopher's commendation of the energy of a marmoset in a wheel, but nothing could be more certain to pain them and to evoke their contempt than the British novelist's guide to the profession of letters. They would hold it to be corrupt, blasphemous, an abomination. They would say

that the man who makes the writing of books a trade, who thinks of literature in terms of commerce, is on the level of an acrobat, as bad as a simoniacal clerk, and probably guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

In Russia the writer is sacred. He is a prophet and a priest. It is his high vocation to bring light to the blind, to comfort the afflicted, to denounce the unjust and the tyrant, to probe the secrets of the heart, to reveal the ugliness that beauty hides and to show the loveliness veiled by sin and wretchedness. We may admire the style of Turgeniev, the psychology of Dostoievsky, or the power of describing the human body displayed by Tolstoi. Russians appreciate these qualities, but their admiration for the three writers rests on a different basis. Turgeniev's hatred of serfdom, the pitifulness of Dostoievsky, and Tolstoi's ability to show the beauty of simplicity, have gained them love which talent alone could never have secured. That they made money from their books, well and good; but that they should have made money their chief aim and allowed the hope of profit to influence their writings would be thought intolerable. The Russian ideal for a man of letters has been well described by a poetess. According to her he is "the buckler and the sword of the country, the source of ideas, the voice and the tongue of the poor and the silent, the first ray of the dawn of bright days." These are high demands; that they have been obeyed can

be ascertained from the pages of Russian literature. At a time when a rigorous censorship of the press prevented the free expression of public opinion in the newspapers of the country, the poet and the novelist immolated themselves on the altar of Freedom, and the white road to Siberia was worn by their footsteps.

"Leave father and mother. Build no nest, be alone. Once and for all extinguish the human passions in thy soul. Be obdurate to the seductions of love, of wealth, of glory. Be holy. In thy breast keep thy heart intact and pure, then give it wholly to thy unhappy brothers; where thou hearest a lament, thither must thou go. Suffer more than all. Remain poor and naked. And thou wilt be great and the world will be humbled by thy reproach."

These words, which I give in Mr. Bernard Miall's translation, might have been written by a Christian mystic; they might be palmed off on the unwary as a passage from the works of St. John of the Cross. But this exhortation was not written in the cloister or composed for the edification of nuns; it is an appeal to the youth of Russia made by a man who had ceased to believe in the supernatural character of Christianity. A Russian may take off the cross that is hung round his neck at the font; he cannot tear it from his heart. He may become the enemy of society, he may hold and propagate anarchical principles, he may be a terrorist and count killing no murder, he may commit hideous crimes in the holy name

of Liberty and murder those who wield authority; yet his detestable life may be sublime, and his immolation of self command the reverence of those who abhor his abominable doctrines and his evil deeds. This is not the time to tell tales of revolutionaries; for they are placing themselves under authority, and those who were ready to lay their lives down on the scaffold are now willing to die on the battlefield for love of Russia.

"I am on my way to enlist," said a young Russian to an English friend, whom he met in the streets of Paris at the beginning of the war. "It is impossible for me to get back to Russia to join the army, and I am hoping I shall be allowed to serve with the French."

"I don't understand," said the Englishman. "You have told me that you are an anarchist, a revolutionary; and whenever I have met you, you have tried to persuade me that your Government is the most execrable in the world. What is the meaning of this sudden change?"

"The Fatherland is in danger," answered the young man, and went on his way.

One of the leaders of the Social Revolutionary party, an organization responsible for many political crimes, returned to Russia on the outbreak of war, in order to offer his services to the sovereign whose authority he had spent his life in undermining. His adventure was quixotic. There are crimes that love cannot blot out and justice may not ignore; the unrepentant prodigal

was arrested, condemned to undergo a suitable punishment—and quickly pardoned.

When revolutionaries are exchanging a perverted for a noble idea of patriotism, it is well to be silent about the crimes that must be adduced if the splendour of their self-sacrifice is to be properly understood. The spirit of these mistaken men and women is shown in the hymn they sing at the graveside of a revolutionary: "You have given up all," runs the refrain; "honour and love and life itself; farewell, brother, your end is noble." And these words are a just summary of the life of many a pious assassin. I have told in another book the story of Catharine Breshkovsky, a woman of rank who left her husband, and abandoned everything that makes life sweet to most of us, in order to join the revolutionary ranks. I cannot refrain from calling her to mind again. For nearly half a century she has been an agitator, in constant fear of arrest, or a prisoner, or an exile. She waits for the approach of the deliverer in a desolate Siberian village, and, when he comes, no more fitting epitaph can be found to mark her resting-place than the words of the revolutionary hymn.

Have you ever seen a Russian cabman? He is an odd creature, dressed in a robe like a dressing-gown, girded with a narrow cincture of brilliant chintz or velvet. You may call him your little brother, or your little father, but, all the same, you will find it difficult to realize that he is a human being with a soul. He appears to

have the intellect of a mollusc. You may find him fast asleep on the box of his cab at a street corner, and have to dig him in the ribs in order to induce him to wake up and take you on your way. If he happens to drop off to sleep again, while he is driving, you may hit him behind, fairly hard, for he is stuffed out with clothes and padding, like a pin-cushion. He will not swear, he will not even murmur at your vigorous thrusts. He will possibly drive you in the opposite direction to that in which you want to go, because he does not know the way and it has not occurred to him to inquire. He may stop and say hopelessly that he cannot find the house you want. You may storm at him, call him pet names, swear at him; and he will pay no more attention to you than if he were a cabbage. And now this queer creature has at last convinced me that he has a soul. Here is the proof: on the 19th of December, 1914, all the cabmen of a provincial town gave their takings to a fund for the assistance of wounded soldiers. They carried collecting-boxes, slung round their necks, and asked those who employed them to put their fares in these sealed boxes, which were to be opened by the organizers of the fund. And their sacrifice was not a light one; for Russian cabmen work exceedingly long hours and earn little. I have swaggered along a mile of road in a carriage and pair from a railway station to a provincial hotel for the sum of fivepence.

And why write about these trivialities of

AN OLD BELIEVER.

sacrifice at a time when a thousand noble deeds are being done every day? I have written of the cabmen's charity because it is an indication of the temper of the common people of Russia. And there are other straws to show the way the wind blows. The poor folk of Petrograd deprived themselves of their garments, in order to send them to the Poles and Jews who had been reduced to misery by the German invasion.

"We have not sorted out the things," said one of the Russian ladies, who came to Varshava with the gifts of the citizens of Petrograd. "We have brought everything, just as it was sent to us, so that you will be able to see that there are people who have sent their last shirt."

There are no superfluities in the Spartan homes of the Russian peasants; but in many a village bedding and clothing has been collected to send to the front, mattresses and sheepskin coats, more lovely to the gaze of angels than cheques for a thousand pounds sent to patriotic funds by people who will not lie less softly at night for their becoming generosity nor feel the cold more keenly.

The Russian peasant may be ignorant, he may ask you how the crops looked as you came from New York to England, he may be superstitious; but his history shows, not merely that he has a good heart, but that he is capable of the most exalted heroism. No martyrs have shown greater constancy and fearlessness than the Old Believers, almost all of whom were peasants, in the persecu-

tion which disgraced the regency of Sophia and the early rule of Peter the Great. The Old Believers disputed no doctrine of the Orthodox Church; but they objected to ceremonial changes, made by the learned and relentless Patriarch Nikon, and passionately refused to tolerate them for reasons which could only commend themselves to the ignorant. A controversy, and then a persecution, arose about the manner of making the sign of the cross, the spelling of the Holy Name, the shape of the cross on the sacramental bread, and about the question whether Alleluia should be sung twice or thrice, whether an ecclesiastical procession should march westward, with the sun, or eastward, against the sun. And in defence of ancient ceremonies and a corrupt tradition of orthography, thousands of peasants, both men and women, died on the scaffold or at the stake, and scores of thousands suffered at the hands of torturers whose cruelty might have made a Nero envious or inclined a Torquemada to clemency. And no *auto-da-fé* was as horrible as the voluntary holocaust of themselves that the Old Believers made in their passion for martyrdom.

There is an island in Lake Ladoga, on which stands an ancient monastery. In 1688, in the year in which William of Orange landed at Torbay as the defender of the Protestant principles of England, some two thousand Old Believers, who had been hiding from the persecutors in the snowy forests that border the great lake, marched

over its frozen surface to this monastery, drove away the monks, and prepared to ascend to heaven by chariots of fire. They lived undisturbed on the island for several weeks, and worshipped in the wooden church of the convent. There they were free to cross themselves in the manner of their forefathers, with two fingers placed together, instead of in the new-fangled, pinch-of-snuff way, three fingers together, the abominable innovation of Nikon. And the poor souls stored much inflammable matter in the church, in preparation for the coming sacrifice. When, at last, soldiers from Novgorod came in the name of the inquisitors, these ignorant peasants locked themselves in the church, set fire to it, and perished in the flames. The tragedy was repeated in the same place and in the same manner a few years later. It is said that ten thousand persons perished thus in the north of Russia alone. There is no more hideous example of fanaticism than this. There is no record of self-sacrifice more marvellous.

And are we to be expected to admire such monstrous behaviour? I dislike giving a direct answer to a question of that kind. Allow me, instead, to tell a tale.

"Ai, yi yi!" cried Apostle Peter, when he opened the door of Paradise and saw the peasants of the islet, that lies in the midst of Ladoga, stepping out of their flaming chariots. "Who are you?"

"We are martyrs," said the two thousand peasants.

"Nonsense!" cried Apostle Peter. "We're not expecting any. Go away at once."

"We burnt ourselves alive," said the peasants.

"A deadly sin," said Apostle Peter tartly, and began to push the gate to.

But one of the peasants was too sharp for him. He got his foot inside the door, so that it would not shut, and he shouted through the chink.

"We refused to make the accursed pinch-of-snuff cross," he cried.

"We refused to spell the name of the Heavenly Tsar with an 'e'," shouted all the other peasants.

And when he heard these things, Apostle Peter was so astonished that he opened the door again.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the holy Russian land," said the two thousand peasants.

"A queer place," said Apostle Peter. "You pay no attention to my successors on earth and the consequence is all this nonsense. Driving up here in flaming chariots! I don't know what we're coming to." And he was very angry.

"We burnt candles before your icon every Saturday night," said the peasants.

"That makes a difference," said Apostle Peter in a kinder voice. "You can stay where you are, while I see if anything can be done."

So the two thousand peasants, who had burnt themselves alive, stayed outside the gate of

Heaven, and Apostle Peter sent an angel to fetch a couple of the Fathers of the Church.

"Here is a pack of Russians," said Apostle Peter, when the angel came back with Blessed Vassili and Blessed Ivan of the Golden Mouth, "and not a grain of sense between them. They burnt themselves alive and believe they are martyrs. I shan't let them in unless they drop their silly pretensions. Talk to them."

So Blessed Vassili, the Father of Monks, stood on the threshold of heaven and preached to the peasants for three hours, showing how foolish their conduct had been. And they all stood with their mouths open and listened.

"We are martyrs and we want to come in," they said, when he had done; for his learning is so great that they had not understood a single word he had said.

Then Blessed Ivan of the Golden Mouth opened the eighty-third volume of his works, which an angel had fetched from the library, and began to read them a sermon. While he was doing this, it so happened that Nicholas the Wonder-Worker passed by, and he asked what was going on.

"Blessed Ivan of the Golden Mouth is teaching common-sense to two thousand Russians," said an angel.

Then Nicholas the Wonder-Worker burst out laughing.

"I am a Wonder-Worker," he said, "and I've never been able to do that," and he hurried away to speak about the matter to the Most Holy

Dyeva Marya, whose blue mantle covers her wise and her foolish children alike.

And when the Wonder-Worker stood before the throne of the Most Holy Dyeva Marya, he crossed himself three times and bowed three times and, having gained permission to speak, he related the tale of the two thousand peasants of the islet that lies in the midst of Ladoga.

"And now that they have come to the door of Paradise," he ended, "Apostle Peter won't let them in, until Blessed Vassili and Blessed Ivan of the Golden Mouth have taught them wisdom."

Then the Most Holy Dyeva Marya whispered to Archangel Gabriel, and he flew to the gate of Heaven to stop the Golden Mouth of Ivan and to tell Apostle Peter that he was to let the two thousand peasants come in.

"You won't get any palms," said Apostle Peter, who is very obstinate, as the peasants pushed each other through the gateway.

"Because you're not martyrs," said Blessed Vassili.

"As I have established in the hundred and twenty-third sermon of the eighty-third volume of my works," said Ivan of the Golden Mouth.

And when the peasants came into the presence of the Most Holy Dyeva Marya, they crossed themselves seven times with two fingers and bowed seven times to the earth.

"O Higher than the Cherubim! More lovely than the Seraphim!" they cried, "we are martyrs."

Then the Most Holy Dyeva Marya, who is wiser than the Fathers of the Church and wiser than the Apostles, smiled sweetly; and she placed in the hands of the two thousand peasants palms that were made of gold.

The moral of this pretty tale is doubtless excellent, but I think it likely that most people who read this book will be inclined to argue that, however good may have been the motives of the peasants who burnt themselves alive, or of the women who left their husbands to live like nuns or to revolutionize society, it would be easier to admire the virtues and the spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by the Russian people were it more practical and less exotic.

Just as a stream of running water is a power that may be harnessed and employed to bring prosperity to the country-side through which it flows; so the spiritual exaltation of the Russian people is a force that may be applied to the practical advantage of the nation, by him who has the skill to direct it, and has, indeed, proved itself to be of supreme value in crises of the national life. This is the force that deprived Napoleon of a triumph and wrapt his soldiers in winding-sheets of snow. This is the force that swept aside the opposition of the Crown to a reform of the constitution and put into motion the machinery of parliamentary life. This is the force which has driven drunkenness away from the holy Russian land and compelled nations,

more skilled in the arts of civilization, to admire a sacrifice to patriotism they are incapable of imitating.

It was Rostoptchin, Governor of Moscow, who conceived the idea of making the ancient capital a desert in order to thwart the ambition of Napoleon and to save Russia from a disastrous peace; but it was the willingness and the ability of the citizens to sacrifice themselves and their substance that allowed him to prosecute a plan which was as desperate as it was valiant. He had heard the shout that went up from the nobles of the city, when the Emperor had appealed to them. "Ask what you will. We offer you all. Take it." He knew the immense sacrifices already made by the merchants, who had poured their money into the public treasury. He counted on the spirit of detachment to be found in the common people. That he did not demand sacrifices that he was not prepared to make himself may be judged from the message to the invaders he wrote on the ruins of his country house in the neighbourhood of the city: "For eight years I have been engaged in beautifying this country-side, and I have lived here happily in the bosom of my family. The inhabitants of these lands, seventeen hundred and twenty in number, leave them at your approach, and I myself set fire to my house, so that it may not be defiled by your presence. Frenchmen! I have abandoned to you my two Moscow houses, with furniture worth half a million roubles; here you will find only ashes."

While the French armies were marching on Moscow, this indomitable man ordered the inhabitants to leave. They obeyed without hesitation and without complaint. The palaces of nobles and the warehouses of merchants were left to be pillaged by looters and gutted by fire. The humbler citizens passed out of the city in long processions, led by priests, who bore crosses and sacred icons. And the fugitives sang hymns as they left their homes to seek precarious shelter in the villages of the surrounding country.

" Quel événement invraisemblable ! " exclaimed Napoleon, when he was told that Moscow had been evacuated by its inhabitants.

He stood on the heights that dominate the capital, and he could not persuade himself that the fantastic city of a Persian tale, whose golden domes glittered in the autumn sunshine, was a desert.

" Allez, amenez-moi les boyards," he commanded.

The order could not be executed. The descendants of the boyars had gone. No wreaths of smoke hung above the enchanted city. No hum of life came from within its walls. The hearths were cold and the streets empty. A quarter of a million citizens had left their homes and gone away. Only the dregs of the population, some fifteen hundred souls, remained. Beneath the spell of the golden symbols of sacrifice, that rise above its splendour, Moscow lay still.

" Better burn it," said some merchants to

Count Rostoptchin, when he told them that the French would occupy the city.

Was it by accident that a fire raged in the heart of Moscow on the night of Napoleon's entry? Was it by chance or by design that, when the French believed themselves to be masters of the flames, a conflagration burst out again and enveloped the city. Was it patriotism that kindled the flames which swept the Kremlin and drove the baffled Emperor from the palace of the Tsars, within whose walls he had tried to mitigate the bitterness of failure by nursing the illusions of a conqueror's vanity?

It is unlikely that these questions will ever be satisfactorily answered. But whether the burning of Moscow was deliberate or accidental, the considered deed of patriots or the work of the rabble, the glory of the citizens who left their homes and their substance to fate cannot be taken from them.

"There is always a way of being useful to one's country, when one hears the voice that cries: Sacrifice thyself for my salvation. Then one despises dangers, overcomes obstacles, shuts one's eyes to the future; but the instant that one troubles about oneself and begins to calculate, one does nothing worth doing and sinks back into the vulgar crowd."

These are words written by Rostoptchin, eleven years after he superintended the evacuation of

Moscow. The events of 1915 show us that the peoples of the Russian empire can still stand the test of the Governor's lofty standard. A thousand deeds of heroism on the battlefield and in enforced retreat, and the exodus, that leads to no promised land, from towns and villages that they themselves have given to the flames, of an army of old men and women and children with a front of a thousand miles, show that the spirit of the Muscovites of a century ago still lives in the hearts of the Russian people and inspires Poles and Lithuanians and Letts to make a supreme sacrifice on the altar of Freedom.

CHAPTER VII

It is possible, and even probable, that I may be told that in the last chapter I have not been true to a principle which I laid down earlier in this book.

"You have been idealizing the Russians," it may be said, "you have been showing Russia in the rosy light you pretend to dislike, you have been rhapsodizing; in a word, you have been writing in a manner which you complain of when other people adopt it, and, moreover, you have been dwelling exclusively on qualities which the Russians make out are natural to them, and not a single word have you said of the achievements for which they consider that they ought to be given some credit."

Well, naturally, as I want you to like my Russian friends, I have attempted to indicate some of their good qualities in introducing them. It is the common practice. I am presented to Julia and told that she plays the violin delightfully; it is only when I say that I find her perfectly charming that I am told it is a thousand pities that she has such a vile temper. Tullus, whose meanness is proverbial, is introduced to me as a person who is interested in the condition of the working classes, and Publius, the

VERA FEODOROVNA KOMMISARZHEVSKAYA AS SISTER BEATRICE.

epicure, as an authority on cuneiform inscriptions. I have done nothing worse than conform to an established and, in my opinion, good rule governing social intercourse. But I should not like you to run away with the idea that all Russian peasant women are like Martha, who gave the savings of a lifetime to help the Tsar to fight the Germans, or that all ballerini are prepared to put art before money. It can hardly be expected that I should enlarge at great length on the faults of the Russians; but because I do not want you to be disappointed if you go to Russia, or if you make Russian acquaintances, or if you happen to marry a Russian, I propose to indicate that the Russians are no more perfect than we are.

A short time ago I heard an Englishwoman make a charming, a graceful, speech about Russia. She stated that the characteristic of the Russian people was pity. And, when I heard her say that, I wondered if she had ever read Turgeniev's *Tales from a Sportsman's Notebook*. Those tales show the pitifulness of one Russian, Turgeniev, in an exposure of the pitilessness of a number of his fellow-countrymen. He wrote of Russian life as it was before the emancipation of the serfs, the fiftieth anniversary of which was celebrated in 1911, and in his tales, as the Vicomte de Voguë has said, there is the murmur of a few poor souls. Do you remember the tale of Arina, whose owners would not allow her to marry the man she loved, because she dressed her mistress's hair so well and the lady disliked

having a married maid to wait on her? or the incident of the lacquey who was to be flogged for neglecting to warm the wine he served to his master?

It was the quality of pity that drove Turgeniev, the son of a country gentleman and proprietor of serfs, from Russia. Let him speak for himself.

"I had either to submit," he writes, "to go quietly along the common path, the beaten road, or to root myself up at a single blow, to push away from me everything and everybody, even at the risk of losing many things that were dear to my heart. That was the part I chose . . . I threw myself head foremost into the 'German Ocean,' which was to purify and to regenerate me, and when, at last, I came out of those waters, I found myself an Occidental, and so I have always remained. . . . I could not breathe the same air, live in the presence of that which I abhorred; perhaps I had not enough empire over myself, enough force of character. I had, at any cost, to get away from my enemy, in order to deal him surer blows from a distance. In my eyes that enemy had a certain aspect, bore a definite name: my enemy was serfdom. Under that name I grouped and put together everything against which I had made up my mind to struggle to the very end, with which I had sworn never to make peace. That was my Hannibal's oath, and I was not the only one to make it then. I went to the West in order to fulfil my oath the better."

And be it noticed that Turgeniev left the land,

that had been his spiritual home, when he saw that its soul was withering in the joy of victory. After 1870 he made his home in France.

The low key in which Turgeniev pitched his tales was not due to the instinct of an artist alone; he was compelled to adopt it in order to fool the censors. The little tales appeared in the pages of a review during a period of three years. The beauty of the author's style drew attention to them, and so cautious was he that even those in sympathy with his ideas did not at first realize that his aim was not merely an artistic one. It was only when the tales were published in a volume that the public grasped the fact that Turgeniev had written a most powerful indictment of serfdom. Those who unburdened their souls by denunciation of the system found that their writings could not be published. Here, for example, is a speech from a play, written by Byelinsky, the great critic, when he was a young man, the production of which was forbidden—

"Who gave this destructive right to some people of enslaving under their authority the will of other people like themselves, and of depriving them of the sacred right of liberty? Who permitted them to defy the rights of nature and humanity? A master can for enjoyment and recreation skin his slave, can sell him like cattle, or can exchange him for a dog, a horse, or a cow, separate him for a whole lifetime from his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, and

from all that he holds dear. Merciful God! did your wise hand bring into this world these reptiles, these crocodiles, these tigers that nourish themselves on the flesh and bones of their neighbours, and drink like water their blood and tears?"

A couplet from Griboyedov's famous comedy, written about 1820—

> His oldest servants, who had served him well,
> Just for a pair of greyhounds he would sell,

refers to an actual occurrence, the exchange of four servants, who had been in his service thirty years, by a General Ismailov for four dogs, an incident which shows the heartlessness which sometimes characterized the proprietors of serfs.

Nowadays people go to see a play, called *Serfs*, in order to understand what Russian life was like under the old conditions, and they tell one tales of the way in which their grandparents treated their slaves.

"My grandfather once had the contents of a samovar of boiling water tipped over a footman, to punish him for spilling a little water from it on the drawing-room floor," said a Russian acquaintance to me; and she was not an old woman, she was, in fact, hardly more than thirty.

The memoirs, the letters, of the years immediately preceding the Emancipation of the Serfs, the records of the courts of justice, the writings of foreign observers, might be drawn on to show that Turgeniev did not paint the darkest shadows

in the melancholy picture of Russian life he has given us in the Sportsman's tales.[1]

The Emancipation of the Serfs took place in 1861, fifty-five years ago. The great reform made by the Saviour Tsar, Alexander II, has changed the face of Russian society. Gone are the splendid equipages with postillions, that made the streets of Petrograd brilliant little more than half a century ago. Gone are the shabby carriages and half-fed horses, which pride of birth compelled the impoverished nobles to maintain; now generals in uniform may be seen haggling with cabmen outside the theatres and the houses of the wealthy. Gone are the crowds of lacqueys and maidservants, that once filled the houses of the great nobles. Gone are the domestic orchestras and troupes of actors and dancers. No longer is a foreigner distressed by hearing that a footman is to be beaten for dropping a dish, or amused by seeing a servant made to stand in a corner during dinner as a punishment for spilling the wine. Gone with the serfs are opportunities for the exhibition of cruelty and tyranny and inducements to the display of the worst qualities of the heart.

The abolition of serfdom has given the lower classes of Russia the dignity which freedom alone can bestow, and it has deprived the upper classes of a power which tended to debase them; but I

[1] The history of the lower classes of Russia and of the Emancipation should be studied in Professor Mavor's admirable volumes, entitled *An Economic History of Russia.*

would not care to hazard the opinion that this great change in the structure of Russian society has wrought so great a change in the character of the Russians that they deserve to be singled out among the nations of Europe as a people peculiarly endowed with the quality of pity. And to argue from the pitifulness of Byelinsky and Turgeniev, from the pitifulness of Dostoievsky, that their fellow-countrymen possess this beautiful quality in so high a degree that we should associate the word pity with the Russians, just as we used to associate the word frivolity with the French, is not only unsound, but exceedingly short-sighted. Indeed, were I to want to make out that the Russians were harsh and pitiless and heartless, I should find a mine of arguments with which to bolster up my contention in the writings of the authors I have just mentioned. But I have no inclination to perform such a foolish feat, nor have I a hazardous position to bolster up. I have at the moment no higher ambition than to convince the reader that the Russians are very much like ourselves. In Russia, as in England, and as in any other country of Europe, there are pitiful people and pitiless people, and people who are sometimes one and sometimes the other. Is the policeman pitiful when he fills his pockets with fruit from a poor old apple-woman's basket and does not pay her a kopeck? Is the same man pitiless when he picks up a drunkard from the ground, puts him tenderly into a cab, and sends him home? We

sometimes describe other people by a happy, if inelegant expression, and say they are queer mixtures. When we are very young, we cannot believe it to be true that the clergyman who preaches on Sundays is a trial to his wife; we are amazed to hear that somebody saw the respectable mayor slightly inebriated in Piccadilly; and our faith in human nature is temporarily lost when we learn that the amiable man who drove us out in his dogcart has been arrested for fraud, and why it is that Uncle John, who used to give us half-sovereigns, is never spoken of. We hear that all these people are queer mixtures. And the older we grow and the more we see of the world the wider becomes the application of the term, until at last we only continue to prefix the noun with an adjective, which has ceased to have any significance, from force of habit. We have discovered that most people are mixtures, including ourselves. Well, the Russians are mixtures, just as we are.

And when I take up the Russian papers now, nothing strikes me more than the extraordinary similarity between the Russians and ourselves in time of war. The determination to go on with the war until Germany is crushed unites them as it does us. But they cannot forget their underlying differences any more than we can. Writers in Russian newspapers of opposed opinions are as vitriolic in their expressions of opinion as writers in the *Star* and the *Evening News* on the question of conscription. And the Russian ladies

who want to "do their bit" seem, according to Russian testimony, to be quite as enthusiastic and sometimes, I am afraid it must be admitted, quite as much in the way as some English ladies. When the first wounded men arrived in Petrograd, fashionable women rushed to the hospitals with all sorts of presents, chocolates and cakes and even ten-shilling bottles of scent. And the soldiers were very pleased. They ate the sweetmeats and cakes, and the scent was stowed away to take to the village. And they were dreadfully bored with all the questions those charming women asked. The Russian writer, from whom I learnt all this, gave a few samples; it is unnecessary to repeat them, for they were exactly the same questions that charming women asked British Tommies in London hospitals. The novelty of visiting soldiers wore off and, besides, the visitors began to feel that, after all, they were not being as useful as they had expected, and so the fashion waned. The visits of fashionable women were less frequent and simple people came. And the soldiers preferred the simple people, because they spoke their language and did not ask questions.

"Please to take some, they are very good for you, most useful," says a wrinkled old woman with a basket of green apples, and the soldier, just to please her, takes two or three, and is comforted, because she is like his mother.

Then came the fashion of having private nursing-homes. Ladies flew to the railway-station in motor-cars, when they heard that wounded

men were going to arrive, and begged and prayed to be given just five or six darling soldiers. And so they gave them a few soldiers who were very lightly wounded and only needed a little spoiling to set them right. Came the day when Olga Alexandrovna was utterly run down with the strain of looking after five or six darling soldiers and obliged to go into the country to revive. Anastasia Pavlovna's nerves were shattered, and nothing could restore her health but a cure at a watering-place in the Caucasus. Sophia Platonovna was a complete wreck, and absolutely needed a thorough rest and the air of the Finnish coast. And so little lazarets closed one by one and, according to the latest information I have from Petrograd, the new way of doing one's bit is to help the poor German prisoners. Olga Alexandrovna has heard that that is what the English ladies are doing.

And when all these nice women, who were so keen to help, found that they were not quite as necessary or quite as useful as they had thought, and went away a little disappointed to find that they were not quite as strong as they had believed, then the capable, practised workers smiled at one another, gave little sighs of relief, and carried on.

In every country I have been in there are to be found women who are angels, women with their wits about them, who never seem to get tired, who, as we say, know what to do, who take hold of us men when we are sick, treat us

like little children, and make us feel that nothing is so good as to be a child. They are not often fashionable, they have not the time to be beautiful, but they are the salt of the earth. And what man in his senses, when he is in distress of body or soul, would prefer to have at his side some exquisite creature of the drawing-room or the stage? Of this glorious company of women, *Matris Misericordiæ filiæ*, there are, to our great good, many in our land. As I have said, they are to be found in every land. Such a one I met in Poland. Not a moment of the day did she seem to lose, from the time that she got up to go to Mass until the time she went to bed. Her chief work was the management of a free dispensary for the poor in Varshava.

"Thank God, I have my dispensary and a hundred and one things to look after," she said to me, when I asked her whether she did not think she was doing too much. "Why, if I had not plenty to do, I should probably be fretting because I have to live in a tiny flat and can't afford fashionable dresses. As it is, how can I possibly think of such things, when I am constantly with these poor people?"

She was a spinster, she was elderly, she was related to most of the nicest people in Poland, and young people adored her. Girls who were beginning to go to parties, young men about town, came to her little drawing-room; if she liked them, she usually became their aunt. And it was, I think, the poor souls she looked after

who gave her the charm that attracted us to her. She could be blunt. She would not hesitate to ask a man about his attention to the practices of religion. And if she thought it necessary she knew how to read him a lecture and then to speak gently, like a mother to a child. And when she did so, the tiresome nephew loved her all the more. When I was leaving Varshava, she gave me her card, so that I might remember a difficult address. On it was written her name, for the purposes of this book, Pia Janowicz. And then she picked up the card and substituted another one, on which was written: Comtesse Pia Janowicz.

"That card came from Switzerland," she said. "I was staying in an hotel there and met a very nice American. I saw a good deal of her, and one day she simply took my breath away by saying that she was surprised at my pettiness and vanity. Naturally I asked her what on earth she meant. 'Why,' she said, 'you call yourself a countess and you aren't one, for you don't dare to put anything more on your card than Pia Janowicz.' 'Aren't I a countess!' I said, and went straight out of the hotel and ordered cards with Countess in black and white. So now I always give them to foreigners instead of the others."

And that pleased me, for it showed that, after all, Aunt Pia was human.

Salutis Infirmorum filiæ, one I met was a young Spanish nun, a nurse, and she saved the life of one of my friends. Another was a German,

the wife of a business-man; she is an enemy now and, as we are charged to love our enemies, let me celebrate her goodness here in the midst of a book about friends; it was so great that they called her the Mother of Berlin. And in Russia there is a multitude of such women. It is they who are at the bedsides of the wounded now, in the field-hospital, in the wards of the cities; it is they who are ploughing the fields, keeping their homes together with more difficulty than their sisters here, for Russia is poorer than England; it is they who are praying for the deliverance of the quick and that the dead may rest. To describe them is easy. Think of the sweetest and most patient and most restful Englishwoman you know, of courageous wives and old women who are carrying on for men who are fighting, and you need no other description of our Russian sisters, *Reginæ Angelorum filiæ*.

But I want to speak of the achievements of modern Russian women, apart from their deeds in the war. And before I do so, I beg leave to speak of Russian women of the past, of two centuries ago, because it is only in the remembrance of the past that the glory of the present can be comprehended. A scene of life in Moscow about the year 1700, a dinner-party, and we will return to the present.

There is a banquet in the Boyar's house. In the banqueting-room the table is spread at which the men will dine. In one of the rooms of the

terem, the women's apartments, the table is spread at which the wives of the Boyar's guests will dine with his wife. In the kitchen the household serfs are preparing many dishes for the banquet. In the cellar serfs are filling silver flagons full of brandy, full of mead and sack and malmsey, and of wine from Germany.

The Boyarina sits in her tiring-room. Her serfs bring to her a heaped-up pile of silk and velvet and gold-tissue and they clothe her in strange Byzantine garments, innumerable vestments, one above another. Burdened with her broidered raiment stands a hieratic figure that has stepped from a mosaic.

When the Boyarina married she was slender, and she feared that her husband would not love her. So she lay long hours upon her bed and drank much brandy. "God make me plump," she said; "I can make myself rosy." Now she is plump and therefore beautiful. She sits at her mirror while they paint her face; for she is modest and knows that no honest woman would allow the natural loveliness of her complexion to be seen. And that night, because the banquet is so grand, her husband's friends will see her. So they whiten well her cheeks and touch them with carmine, and they blacken her eyebrows and the whites of her eyes. She is happy, because the night before her husband beat her. It was long since he had whipped her, and she feared he did not love her; now she knows he loves her still.

The serfs plait the Boyarina's hair in two long tresses and coil them about her head. Then they tire her with a headdress, hiding her hair, with a fringe of pearls that covers her brow and falls almost to her eyes, with a great tiara of gold and jewels, encircling her head like the wide aureole of a saint. And they praise the lady's beauty, tell her the assembled Boyars will be envious of her spouse.

She is a little nervous as she waits for the signal to descend into the banqueting-room. It is so seldom that strange men see her countenance. There are twenty-seven locks to the *terem* and her husband is the guardian of the keys. Sometimes she talks with men who are related to her or to her husband, but never with others, except at wedding feasts. If only there were more wedding feasts! When she goes abroad to visit her friends, she sees the people flitting like ghosts by the windows of her carriage; but they cannot see her because the panes are filled with bladder. On great festivals, when she goes to church, her face is covered with a veil. And life is monotonous. When she married, her mother-in-law told her that she should be the first in the house to rise, in order that she might superintend the tasks of the household serfs, as the monk Sylvester directed. She has manifold household duties. She must see that cooks and maids do their work, that the embroideresses are not idle. For several hours every day she must stand in the domestic chapel while the chaplain reads prayers.

Sometimes men with dancing bears come into the courtyard and she can watch them from her window. There also assemble many beggars. And she gives them gold and silver, when they chant the holy gospel of the rich man in fine linen and the beggar full of sores.

The moment has come. The Boyarina's serfs fling open a door, and she stands, like a glittering idol, at the head of the staircase that leads from the *terem* into the banqueting-room. The incense of a murmur of admiration rises to her. Very slowly she goes down the staircase and her husband leads her to the place of honour beneath the holy icons. There she stands to receive the salutations of the guests, who wear long garments of silk and cloth of gold, with stiff collars that are studded with jewels, and high boots ornamented with pearls. Each man comes and stands before her, bowing low from the waist, and she bows to each in return, but is careful not to bow so low as they. Her eyes meet the blue eyes of a comely youth with a fringe of golden hair. And when the salutations are ended, the host begs the guests to honour him by kissing his wife. And they, being well-mannered, ask him to kiss her first. So he kisses her, and all the others kiss her as they kiss the image of the Iverskaya Mother of God. But when she is kissed by the youth with blue eyes and golden hair, she feels a fluttering of her heart. Salutations ended, she gives to each man half a pint of brandy; but if any are too old or feeble to relish this *apéritif* she gives instead a

goblet of Rhine wine. Listening to the praise they murmur, she goes up the staircase slowly, vanishing within her prison, dreaming of the golden youth.

The banquet begins. The Boyars partake of many dishes and drink deeply of mead and various wines. Most of them do not remember the wise man's counsel: to think of those who have no food and then to praise the Lord, when eating rich and greasy foods. In the *terem* the ladies feast apart with the Boyarina. When the grosser viands have been eaten, the door at the head of the staircase is opened. The Boyarina and the ladies descend into the banquet-room in a long procession. Each has in her hand a golden cup of wine to offer to the Boyar and his friends. Each is like a priestess who knows the ceremonies to be performed in ministering at a shrine. The men rise and bow with reverence, and when the golden cups are emptied, the shining procession ascends the stairs again and vanishes. Then the men drink more freely. There are serfs, the fairest maidens, striplings chosen for their beauty, for the pleasure of these lords.

The next day the Boyarina sends a servant to the houses of the ladies who have dined with her to inquire how they got home. And each sends the same reply: "Tell your mistress I was so drunk that I know not how I got home." And the lady hears the formal answer that politeness prompted, dreaming of the youth who kissed her, of the youth whose hair was gold.

Two years after the dinner-party an ukase flings open the doors of the *terem*. Five years after the party, not a lady of quality in all Moscow who does not wear a hooped petticoat and powdered hair. Eighteen years afterwards, compulsory parties from four to ten for men and women. Less than two hundred years ago that a Russian woman first felt the restraint of a laced bodice and was forced by the Governor of Moscow and the Head of Police of Petrograd, under the orders of the Tsar, to give parties as in France and England.

And the Russian woman of the present, what a marvellous person she is! She may be a practised woman of the world, she may know all there is to be known about microbes, she may be a clerk in a bank, a novelist, a dentist. And when she attends an All Russian Women's Congress, one trembles at the thought of the lengths to which she may not go. She has risen in such an assembly and denounced marriage as an institution no longer fitted to modern needs; and her sentiments have been applauded. Happily, as in our own country, most Russian women do not hold that the words change and progress are synonymous.

But let me speak of two women in particular, one a politician, the other an actress. I had heard much of the politician. I knew that she was a distinguished woman of letters, a notable publicist, and I knew that she was a member of the committee that directed the fortunes of the most

influential political party advocating a progressive policy in parliament and in the country. I was aware that no other woman in Russia held a similar position, or was associated so intimately with men who voiced the opinion of a majority of their fellow-countrymen. And on my way to call on her for the first time I made up my mind that she was a formidable person and that I should not find her, as the Russians say, *sympatishny*. In fact I felt just as I did when I went for the first time to see an Englishwoman, whose name is famous throughout Europe and America as that of an authority on social and economic questions. I expected her to have a masculine air and to be a little hard. In the event, the simplicity and the grace of the Russian and of the Englishwoman made me forget the political position of the one and the public work performed by the other. They were both of them virile in intellect and feminine in charm.

Ævo rarissima nostro simplicitas are words that are not to be applied to Russia. Simplicity has ever seemed to me one of the most attractive qualities of Russian life. It was, I think, the chief secret of the actress of whom I have to tell, as it was of the political woman. Vera Feordorovna Kommisarzhevskaya, our dear Vera Feordorovna, as Russians used to say, was more beloved than any other actress in all Russia. When she died there was not an important town in the land in which dirges were not sung for her soul. I remember standing in a throng of people

in the Kazan cathedral, while the lovely wail of the singers besought heaven to rest her soul. The first time I saw her act she was the erring nun, whose place in the convent is taken by our Lady, in the play of Maeterlinck that most of us have only seen, robbed of its delicate charm, in a travesty they called *The Miracle*. Two moments of that play are engraved in my memory: the moment when the nun, kneeling before the Virgin's image, raises her face for the kiss of the young knight, who bends over her, and the moment when she is dying in the arms of the abbess and her sisters and confesses that she has known human love. The acting of Vera Feordorovna impressed me in the same way as the acting of Duse impressed her the first time she saw the great Italian.

"When I saw Bernhardt," she told me, "I was filled with admiration, and while she was playing I kept thinking of her skill and of her wonderful art; but when I saw Duse I never thought about her art, until I left the theatre and began to realize what a supreme artist she was."

It was like that with Vera Feordorovna. When she acted, her own personality seemed to cease to exist, and on the stage there was no great actress but Beatrice, or Nora, or Mélisande, or Magda.

When I went to see her for the first time, I was shown into her sanctum. It looked like a man's study. There was a desk with a roll-top

and many books. A little woman with a colourless face and colourless hair came in. It was the great actress. She wore a plain stuff dress, the sort of dress a woman who is too much engrossed in helping the poor to trouble about clothes might have worn. She was not beautiful, but the sweetness of her expression, her air of gentleness, gave her a charm which one felt and found difficult to analyze. She sat down in a great basket-chair and leant back, looking too fragile and too weary to get out of it again. I thought of all this when I saw her as Magda and she flashed on to the stage, brilliant, animated, vivacious.

"I left the imperial stage," she told me, "because I found that they were conservative at the Alexander Theatre, content to go on in the old way. There was no love of progress, and I saw that, if I remained there, I should never be able to realize my ideals."

The Alexander Theatre, it must be observed, holds the place in Russia that the Maison de Molière does in France. The actors are paid by the State and are given pensions after a certain number of years' service. Nobody was more beloved there than Vera Feordorovna.

"And when I left," said the great actress, "I had no plans, except that vaguely I hoped to have a theatre of my own, in which I could try and carry out my ideas."

Nothing more characteristically Russian than that vagueness about the future. I remember

once saying to some Russian friends that two young people ought not to have got married, because they hadn't two kopecks to rub together.

"Now that is exactly the sort of thing," said one of my friends, "that one would expect a cold, calculating Englishman to say."

"They love each other," said somebody else, as if that solved the financial question.

I began to say something about love flying out of the window, when another friend interrupted with the remark: "One always gets money somehow."

And, cold and calculating as I may be, it is this happy-go-lucky, let-the-morrow-take-care-of-itself spirit, that is to me part of the charm of Russia. And that was the spirit in which Vera Kommisarzhevskaya left the Alexander Theatre. She knew nothing whatever about business and was shamefully exploited by impresarios, learnt her lesson, and by hard work in the provinces got together the money with which to open the Dramatic Theatre, which all Petrograd called Kommisarzhevskaya's Theatre. It was not in the least like any other theatre in Europe: a long hall, with unornamented white walls, a few boxes on a level with the stage, a gallery, supported on white pillars, running round three sides. A first night was extraordinarily interesting. French actresses from the Michael Theatre in the front row, a little bewildered, gave a touch of elegance to the house; but Vera Feordorovna did not trouble to invite the fashionable world, she asked

men and women whom she believed to be striving for progress in letters, in politics, in the sister arts, as she was in the art of the theatre. It was the makers of a new world who met together, the men and women who are moulding the mind of the nation, standing aloof from the official and diplomatic society, the fashionable world, of Petrograd. In the gallery were the children of the New Russia, students, student girls, and never has an actress found the gods more propitious to her than did Vera Feordorovna. She would put on new pieces which she did not expect to be financially successful. She would experiment in new ways of presenting old plays. The experiments might be unsuccessful, but people would overlook mistakes, because, as they said, Vera Feordorovna had ideals and was trying to give new life to the theatre. And in the end it was her desire to add to the great fame enjoyed in Russia by a British dramatist that took her from us. She had shown us the pessimism of Andréev, the naturalism of Wedekind, she had given us a mystery-play of Sologub, dream-plays of Maeterlinck, and she resolved to stage Wilde's *Salome*. A text of the play was sanctioned by the censor. The *répétition générale* attracted, as usual, the progressive world of the capital. The reception of the play was enthusiastic and the police-officials, whose business it was to represent the censor, declared that they were delighted.

"You see," said a friend, with a little air of triumph, "there is greater freedom in Russia

than in England; you have to come to Petrograd to see a play by one of your own poets."

His triumph was short-lived. The Holy Synod, at the instigation of the clerical party in the Imperial Duma, took action, and on the eve of the first performance for the general public the acting of the play was peremptorily forbidden. Just as Vera Feordorovna did not seem to mind whether there was a part for herself in the plays she thought it a duty to produce, so she did not seem to care whether her productions were profitable or not as long as she could make both ends meet. She had exhausted her available capital in mounting Wilde's play. In order to get new funds to continue her work, she decided, although she was in poor health, to make a long tour in the provinces, in Siberia, in Turkestan. She fell ill of the small-pox in Tashkend and died there. No woman who has died in Russia in the last ten years has been more deeply mourned. John of Kronstadt, Leo Tolstoi, Vera Kommisarzhevskaya, these are the three whose passing touched the heart of Russia the most profoundly in the past decade.

I do not think that any of her friends mourned for the great actress more sincerely than did the political woman of whom I have written. The paths they chose were different, but between them was the kinship of genius, of toil, of nobility of purpose. I think of the narrow lives of the Russian ladies of two centuries ago, mewed in the straitness of the *terem*, and of the spacious

lives of these two ladies of modern Russia, and again there come into my mind words I have already quoted more than once: "We do not walk, we run; we do not run, we fly."

I began this chapter by showing the reverse of a medal whose face is fair, and I find that instinctively I have turned the medal over again to draw attention to beauties which I had neglected to point out. That pleasant task shall be continued in the following chapter.

A POPULAR PICTURE POST-CARD.

(The reply of the First Duma to the Speech from the Throne : a demand for Democratic Liberties.)

CHAPTER VIII

WHAT is the greatest glory of the Russian land? what is the chief and most legitimate source of pride to the Russian people?

There are men in Russia who would reply that the incorruptible bodies of the saints in the catacombs of Kiev are the greatest glory of the Russian land, that the conservation of the apostolic faith in the complicated ceremonies of the churches is their greatest pride.

There are others, a multitude that is ever increasing, whose thoughts are our thoughts, whose words are our words, men and women and children, who have learnt to admire our laws and to hold our institutions in high esteem, who love our land because it is free and love us because we have made it free, and they would give answers to our questions of a different nature, less curious to us, more easily understood. They would not in reply show us the countless shrines that adorn their land. They would not speak of the religious fervour of the common people, nor of the spirit of kindness, of hospitality, of self-sacrifice, which distinguishes their race. They would tell us that the greatest glory of the Russian people is its love of Freedom and its greatest pride the triumphs it has achieved in the holy name of Liberty.

In the summer of 1906 we heard in Petrograd that a number of members of the House of Commons had resolved to come to Russia, in order to show their brotherly affection for the members of the first Imperial Duma. The British members of parliament did not come to Russia, and their inability to fulfil an engagement they had made was a keen disappointment to those who had hoped to welcome them; yet I cannot regret that the proposal was made, for it evoked a response in Russia that made me understand the essential unity of the British and Russian peoples and the solidarity of their aims. The Russians who were arranging the details of the reception of the British deputation did me the honour of asking me to join their committee. Day after day there came to us from the provinces addresses of welcome to be presented to the visitors from England. I have one of these addresses in my possession. It came from an obscure town of which I had never heard until the document was placed in my hands. It is a simple and touching address, setting forth the joy that the townsmen had felt, when they heard that a deputation of the British House of Commons was coming from free England to give hope to those who were engaged in a struggle for Liberty. And it ended in a note of confidence and high aspiration—

"We shall be free! And then the British and Russian peoples will work together for the lasting happiness of humanity."

And all the addresses we received were couched in similar terms. Those who hold such language are more than friends and allies united to us by the iron bond of war against a common enemy; they are brothers, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone.

Remember, there was a time when we were hated in Russia. There was a time when quarrelling moujiks, having exhausted every term of vituperation in the Russian language, would shout at one another two English names, learnt in the course of a war which we can only think of with bitter regret: "You Palmerston! you Napier!"

Our fervour in the worship of that fair goddess, whose most splendid and most ancient shrine is England, has gained for us absolution and made the Russian people forget past enmity.

There were priests of our temple of Liberty, who heard with misgiving of the *rapprochement* between the Governments of Russia and Great Britain, which resulted in the treaty of 1907. Should a free people seek the friendship of blasphemers of the goddess? Should the ministers of a sovereign people display cordiality to the ministers of an autocratic emperor and forget the allegiance that Liberty demands? Some of those who spoke in this manner looked to Germany and saw in her a better friend than Russia. They were thinking of the Germany that was the spiritual home of Turgeniev, of the Germany that was the spiritual home of Lord Haldane, and

they did not understand that since the time when the Russian writer went into Germany for purification, since the time when the British statesman found refreshment and sustenance for his soul in the schools of Weimar, a new Germany, false to the past, had arisen.

In Russia men understood these things better. It was the men who were in the forefront of the battle for Freedom who rejoiced to see the strengthening of the ties between their Government and ours. From the lips of such men as Paul Miliukov, Maxim Kovalevsky, Peter Dolgorukov, I heard expressions of the utmost satisfaction at the deepening of an official friendship which a good many Englishmen, holding the same political views and cherishing the same ideals, publicly deplored. I was told by the representative men I have named that they welcomed a cordial understanding between the Russian and British Governments, because they were persuaded that the influence of England would strengthen their hands and subserve their efforts to make Russia free. In England some of my political friends held a contrary opinion, and when I attempted to urge on them the Russian view, with which I was in agreement, I found that they suspected me of having abandoned my political principles and of having been seduced by some magic of priests of orthodoxy and officials of autocracy. In Russia it was the enemies of Freedom, the men who resented the creation of the Imperial Duma by the

Emperor and were doing their utmost to bring it into contempt, who disliked the English friendship.

"We look upon Germany as the most natural friend for Russia," said one of these men to me, a prominent member of the Duma and an accomplished man of the world.

Men of this sort desired to see a solid Russo-German friendship established, because they knew that the influence of Germany at Court and with the Government was reactionary. The Germans desired their neighbour to be weak and were sharp enough to see that when the Russian people became free they would at the same time become strong. Progressive Russians — I do not refer alone to those whom I might legitimately call Liberals, but also to men whose political views were akin to those of British Conservatives— dreaded the influence of Germany on the same grounds as reactionary politicians laid store by it, and while desiring friendly relations with both England and Germany, made it clear that if one of the two friends had at any time to be sacrificed it should not be England. And this conviction was so strong and its expression so vehement that it was sometimes a source of embarrassment to the Cabinet. The difference of the manner in which the Russian press treated the visit of Edward VII to Russia, in 1907, and a subsequent visit of the German Emperor is a case in point.

I am not likely to forget the summer morning

when I looked out over the beautiful bay of Revel, on whose bright waters were lying the *Standart* and the *Polar Star*, and saw on the horizon three dun-coloured shadows that, growing larger and deeper in colour, materialized and became three ships, the yacht of the King of England sailing between two men-of-war. The King had come to consecrate in royal pageantry the friendship of his subjects with the Russian people. The mist of doubt and suspicion that had hung between us had been dissipated, and I knew, as I watched the ships sail into the bay, that the best hearts in the Russian land were glad that the king of the freest men in the earth had come to their shores. His presence was to them a pledge of future glory. And in these days I like to think of King Edward, as I saw him on the *Victoria and Albert* at Revel, in the long grey overcoat and the astrakhan and scarlet cap of a Russian general.

The Russian newspapers sent representatives to Revel to describe the meeting of the King and the Tsar, and they published leading articles about the event of the most gratifying character. The urbanity of the Russian press on this occasion made its conduct the more remarkable during a subsequent visit of the Kaiser. It all but ignored the German visit. The newspapers contented themselves with printing the speeches of the Tsar and the Kaiser, and the glacial periods in which the court reporter stated who had lunched and dined on the imperial yachts. I myself made

the short journey to the Finnish coast to see the meeting of the two monarchs and found that the only other journalist there was a young Finlander, employed by the *Daily Mail.* There were no representatives of the great Russian newspapers. In an arm of the sea, which might have been a lake, the same pageant was being played that I had seen at Revel. It is the custom of monarchs when they meet to cause a noise to be made with cannons and to have the same tunes played repeatedly on brazen instruments. These practices become ludicrous when there is no audience to be entertained by the noise and the tunes. All Russia was listening to the thunder of the guns that welcomed Edward VII and to the music of our national anthem. I heard the same music as I sailed down the Finnish fiord, floating to me across the water as William II left the *Hohenzollern,* and it came to me more faintly when he arrived on the *Standart;* but I and a few fishermen were the only persons who listened to it. The firing of an imperial salute, when the German yacht and the German men-of-war steamed away, scared the sea-fowl who make their homes on the shore of the lake, but it was not heard in Russia.

Mr. Stolypin, who was then Premier, very properly desired that the press should make some graceful reference to the visit of the sovereign of a friendly power. He sent for Mr. Suvorin, the editor of the *Novoe Vremya,* and asked him to

publish a leading article, welcoming the Kaiser to Russian waters. Mr. Suvorin refused to make any promise, said that he was an old man who left the paper in the hands of his young men, and that they were very much taken up with the friendship for England.

"I warn you," said the Premier, "that if you publish a hostile article, your paper will be confiscated."

Possibly Mr. Suvorin chuckled when he reflected that, although the Premier possessed machinery for silencing newspapers, he had no means with which he could compel them to speak. What was to be done? Two brilliant leader-writers, Mr. Igorov and Mr. Pilenko, must, I think, have put their heads together. However that may be, the *Novoe Vremya* provided no material for the German journalists who were ransacking the press to discover agreeable comments to telegraph to Berlin. On the first day of the imperial visit the chief leading article dealt with a treaty, concluded some months before between Great Britain and Siam, which was represented as a triumph of British, and a defeat of German, diplomacy. On the second day of the visit those ingenious leader-writers raked up an old tale about a hydropathic establishment in Madeira, which was in some way supposed to be connected with an attempt to create a German sphere of influence in that agreeable island. The tone of the *Novoe Vremya* at this time was essentially conservative,

although not reactionary; that is to say, it represented the opinions of a large number of people who welcomed the establishment of a form of representative government, but did not desire more sweeping reforms than those foreshadowed in the October Manifesto, a fact that makes its attitude the more remarkable. It was impossible not to feel some sense of gratification at the preference for the friendship of England to that of Germany displayed in these manœuvres; but I am bound to say that in my judgment, whether the episode be regarded from the standpoint of Russian interests or of British interests, Mr. Stolypin was right and the leader-writers wrong.

The attitude of the Russians to the foreign policy of their Government was in the main dictated by considerations of its effect on home affairs. The progressive parties, in which I do not include the revolutionary and socialistic groups, were all for a British policy, because they believed it would help them to consolidate their conquests and to attain their aims. The reactionary parties favoured a German policy, because they believed that German influence would be an asset in their struggle with the votaries of Liberty. The leaders of public opinion, however, did not lose sight of the effect of an *entente* with England on the position of Russia as a great power.

"I desire to see closer relations with England established, because I believe her influence will be

beneficial," said Prince Dolgorukov to me at the time when these questions were being keenly discussed both in Russia and in England; "but I am a patriotic Russian, as well as a Liberal, and it is also because I want to see Russia strong that I am in favour of a British policy."

But undoubtedly the idea that dominated the minds of a vast number of Russians, who ardently desired to see their Government and ours united by closer ties, was the belief that union with a free people would be an advantage to them in the struggle to make themselves free. It was neither our might nor our wealth that drew them to us. Our love of Liberty was the charm that conquered their hearts. And outside the limits of Russia proper, in the dark days, I have often been profoundly touched at the confidence displayed by Poles and Esthonians, Letts, Georgians, and others, that we in England, because we were free and because we were the champions of Freedom, sympathized with them in their trials and understood their aspirations. And sometimes, in talking with these people, I have felt embarrassed and ashamed when their conviction of our interest has made me think of the ignorance displayed by many Englishmen, not only of their difficulties and aims, but of the most elementary facts about them. "We welcome the representatives of free England. We shall be free. We shall work together with you when we are free." In these three sentences of addresses,

that the members of the House of Commons did not come to Russia to receive, are summed up the reasons which made multitudes love us, before ever war united us in an alliance and drew the peoples of the two empires together in the struggle against the blasphemers of the goddess, the chiefest foes of Liberty.

It would be a mistake to think that the Russians consider the measure of Freedom we have acquired is complete. Those who admire our political freedom the most, laugh the loudest at our servitude to social convention, and are prone to betray indignation at our attempt to impose a moral code on persons who may possibly not accept the principles of the religion that enjoins it or believe the revelation, by which it is sanctioned, to be divine. In Russia the restraints on conduct are less severe than in England. Russians are disinclined to concern themselves with the morals of their neighbours. The trivial rules that govern the behaviour of a large number of persons in our own country and form part of the discipline of English life would be considered irksome by most Russians.

I have sometimes been a good deal amused at the accounts of English life given me by Russian friends. There was, for instance, Anastasia Ivanovna, who went to England with her husband to visit an English cousin, a lawyer living in a provincial town.

" When we went into the drawing-room before

dinner on the first evening we were there," said Anastasia, " there was my cousin in a ' smoking ' with a starched shirt and lacquered shoes and his wife *décolletée*. Of course, it had never occurred to us to dress up, though I must say I had tucked my best lace-handkerchief into my bodice. And it wasn't as if they were expecting guests. I was never more astonished in my life."

" Perfectly ridiculous ! " commented Anastasia's husband.

" And it wasn't as if she had a pretty neck to show," said Anastasia spitefully ; " she had a thin neck and thin shoulders."

There, then, is an expression of middle-class Russian opinion about one of the most cherished conventions of the English. And here is the view of some persons of higher rank, Poles. I was going to stay with them for the first time at a country house in the kingdom of Poland, where life is as simple as in Russia. The phaeton with excellent horses at the railway-station, the gates of a park thrown open by an aged lodge-keeper, the great house in gardens with a lake, all made a struggle into a boiled shirt that evening seem as inevitable as the end of a Greek tragedy.

" I hope you're not going to do anything serious," said my host, when I said I was going to get ready for dinner ; " *comme un smoking ou un frac.*"

And so I did not do anything serious. The host appeared at dinner in a black tail-coat and

his wife in a high gown. They talked about English ways.

"We go to England every year," said my hostess, "and the last time we went we were asked to stay at Arundel Castle. What a place! Heaven, I call it, simply heaven! So we know your English customs and we think them very beautiful; but of course they wouldn't do for us in Poland, where we are simple people."

"Here are we in the depths of the country," said her husband; "of course, if we have a hunt it's a different thing, but what would be the point in ordinary circumstances of our putting on evening things for dinner?"

I might have spoken of the value of discipline, of the appetite created by changing in a frosty bedroom, of the agreeable *stimmung* induced by a boiled shirt, but never having considered the question he proposed, I was at a loss for a reply. Besides, I was thinking of the white indignation with which an English clergyman of the old school had told me of a miscreant who omitted to bring evening clothes when he came to stay at his house, and of an Englishwoman who spoke of a guest as if she had gone away with the family plate, because the wicked girl had appeared in only two different evening gowns during a visit of a week.

The simplicity of my Polish friends has probably stood them in stead in these stern days. The tide of war has engulfed their home, "our Paradise," they called it.

I have laboured a trivial point at too great length; let me give a more striking illustration of the freedom from convention to be remarked in Russian life. A friend of mine was walking in the grounds of a Russian country house with one of her hostess's daughters, when the girl suddenly made up her mind to go and stay with some people who lived twenty miles away. She rushed to the stable, had a horse saddled, galloped off without even taking the trouble to find a hat, and returned two days later, saying that she had had a delightful visit and that her friends had been enchanted to see her. And nobody, with the exception of the Englishwoman who told me the story, thought her conduct in the least odd. What a gulf between that free Russian girl and an English girl of similar position!

There are Russians who affect English manners. There are upstarts who try to conceal their lack of breeding by an affectation of foreign elegance. I know, for instance, of a family in which the young ladies, whose grandfather was a serf, are daily beautified by a French coiffeur, a dressmaker and a manicurist. These people are exceptional. The ordinary Russian detests convention. If he has the means, he will entertain lavishly. But I cannot even imagine a Russian and his wife, who wish to ask friends to dine or to give a dance for their daughters, deciding not to do so because their means do not permit of expensive food or fashionable dresses. I cannot

conceive of them saying: "Better not to do it at all than not to do it well!" And those charming Russian women love pretty dresses. They love to trot off and have their hair done elaborately by a clever Frenchman. And if a woman hasn't a pretty dress, hasn't the two roubles that Pierre or Jacques would want for doing her hair, it doesn't occur to her that she must mope at home and decline an invitation. Off she goes to the theatre, to a party, admires the pretty frocks and Marcelle waving of other women, just a little thought of envy in her heart, just a tinge of longing, and thoroughly enjoys herself. That pointed remarks about sweet hats seen in shop windows, or sweeter hats in the inner chambers of French milliners, are never made, that lamentable and wholly untrue statements about having no clothes never disturb the peace of Russian homes, I would not be so hardy as to allege; for, after all, a Russian woman is no more an angel than an Englishwoman; but, clothes or no clothes, she refuses to be cheated of amusement. Indeed, there is a legend in Petrograd of a lady who came to a masquerade in the Marinsky Theatre dressed in nothing more than a mask and the ace of hearts. It is said that she was awarded the first prize for the prettiest costume. And that tale leads me to deal with a graver subject than the Russians' contempt for the petty restraints of social convention, namely, their common assumption that certain laws of Christian morality may be regarded

merely as counsels of perfection, and that public censure, or the censure of society, on persons whose lives are not in conformity with these commandments or counsels is an infringement of individual liberty.

I was once talking to a Russian, an elderly man of unimpeachable moral character, about Russia's need of greater freedom, a topic which his democratic views allowed me to assume would be congenial to him.

"You English!" he suddenly exclaimed with great vehemence, "what right have you to talk about Liberty, when you shut up your greatest literary men in prison because their morals are not to your liking?"

The speaker was, as I have already observed, a man of the highest moral integrity, otherwise his words would be of no account, and as I recall them I seem to see the flash of indignation in his eyes as he spoke.

I think the great popularity in Russia of the works of the writer to whom he alluded is partly due to the fact that numbers of Russians—I am referring to serious men and women of unblemished reputation—hold that he was a victim of British hypocrisy. And when Russians speak of British hypocrisy, they do not mean to imply that we are a race of immoral persons pretending to be moral, but they do mean to imply that our indignation at conduct we profess to consider immoral is dormant, until it is roused by a public scandal.

It is hardly necessary to add that it is not in Russia alone that hypocrisy is believed to be our besetting sin; at the other end of Europe, in Spain, even the common people can find nothing worse to say of a man than that he is guilty of *hipocresia inglesa*. It would be idle to deny that there is no foundation for the charge. There are secrets which everybody knows and peccadilloes of acquaintances that are talked about and laughed at, until the day when the publicity of the divorce court changes smiles to frowns and closes hospitable doors. Useless to tell Russians that severity supplants complacency in the interests of public morality, useless to quote La Rochefoucauld's invaluable maxim. Even if they acquit you of hypocrisy, they will probably accuse you of bigotry, of puritanism or mediævalism, of an intolerant and persecuting spirit, of inability to understand the value of personal liberty, and possibly end by saying that, being a cold Englishman, you do not understand the nature of love.

No feature of English life astonishes Russians more than the equation we are accustomed to require between a man's private and public life. That the career of a statesman should be ruined by an intrigue with a married woman seems to them ludicrous. It used to be said in Petrograd that one of the advantages of being a Cabinet minister was that one could get a divorce through the Holy Synod with great celerity and have a new wife. A few years ago one of the ministers

fell in love with a married woman and, while her husband was abroad, induced the Holy Synod to grant her a divorce, so that they could be married. Hearing what had happened, the lady's husband, a man of high rank, returned to Russia and made such an ado that the divorce was quashed. However, the lady finally obtained her freedom and married the minister. All Petrograd talked of the affair. Accounts of it appeared in the foreign press, and the lady showed great amiability to the correspondent of one of the German newspapers, in order that a defence of her conduct might be placed before the German public. It did not strike anybody that, in the circumstances, the minister should be dismissed. "Why?" they would have asked. "What connection can there be between his heart and his head?"

There was a good deal of talk in Petrograd one year about a progressive member of the Imperial Duma, who left his wife somewhere in the provinces and brought another lady to the capital, a sensible-looking young person who dressed plainly. His indiscretion did not affect his political career. Some people thought his conduct in bad taste, and a good many said it was a pity that the lady was a Jewess.

It would be wrong to infer from these instances that happy marriages and fidelity are less common in Russia than in England. They are not given here to provide a criterion of Russian morality, but are adduced in order to show the mental

attitude of many Russians to a grave question. The moral code of the Russian Church is identical with that of the Protestant communions and, except in the matter of divorce, which it permits, with that of the Catholic Church. The Church's beneficial influence on the Russian people is evident in the pages of Russian history, and its power to develop certain qualities of character cannot fail to impress anybody acquainted with Russian life; but I do not think that it has ever been so successful as its rivals in reconciling a nation to the restraints it seeks to impose. Its clergy do not possess the same machinery for influencing their flocks that is employed by the Protestant or the Catholic clergy. The exposition of the word of God in sermons, the chief means adopted by Protestant clergymen to enforce the principles of Christian morality, is uncommon in Russia, and the rapid confessions made to a priest once a year have not the same value as a means of moral discipline and training as the penitential system of the Catholics. Religion has infused into the Russian character some of the most beautiful of Christian qualities, but it has not given the faithful the touch of sternness which is characteristic of the attitude of mind to the question under discussion of believing Protestants and Catholics. And I beg leave again to point out that I am comparing two attitudes of mind, and have no intention of making an odious comparison between the con-

duct of Russians and of ourselves or of other peoples of the West. A sharp remark made to me by a Russian Jew, a scientist who had lived in England, may, however, be quoted. "I do not consider that you are essentially more moral than we are," he said; "but you are so engrossed in making money that you have not the time to be immoral."

It must be remembered that in Russia the people whose political ideals are the most pleasing to the average Englishman are very often infidels. In progressive circles it is not seldom that one finds it to be assumed that the falseness of Christianity is too patent to need demonstration. Belief in the principles of Christianity is, moreover, not infrequently regarded as a sign of intellectual feebleness. The rejection of the Faith is apt to become a part of the process of the adoption of Liberal ideas, but at the same time it must be borne in mind that the war has recruited the ranks of the reformers with numbers of men and women who, like ourselves, do not consider that Christianity is inimical to progress. There has not yet been a sustained anti-clerical movement in Russia; but it must be remembered that Russian Liberalism is more akin to Continental, than to British, Liberalism. Those who reject Christianity ought not to be judged by the standard of the Christian code of morals, except in so far as they accept it, when they do not depart from the natural law. It is unjust to

say that a Hindoo is immoral because he has three wives. It is improper to say that the Greeks who first read the Symposium were immoral only because their conception of love is severely condemned in the Jewish and Christian codes of morality. In the same way it is as unreasonable to require modern men and women to conform to a standard of conduct which has no higher sanction in their eyes than custom, as it was for our forefathers to require their contemporaries to go to the parish churches whether they believed in the Thirty-nine Articles or not. Religious toleration must cover conduct as well as faith, otherwise it is imperfect. It is as improper to say that infidels are immoral, when they contract free unions of a permanent nature, as it is to call heretics irreligious because they do not go to Mass.

"Ivan Pavlovitch and his wife were there," said a lady to me, in describing an evening party at which a number of representative men and women of the Liberal party in Petrograd had been present.

"His wife!" I exclaimed. "He's not married."

"But of course he's married," she said. "Tatiana Vassilovna is his wife."

"He boards in her house," I said, "but that is not the same as being married to her; and besides, their surnames are different."

"Oh! they're not married in a legal sense," said the lady, "but they consider themselves to

be husband and wife, and naturally other people do the same."

I knew both Ivan Pavlovitch and Tatiana Vassilovna. They were serious persons and they have now lived together for a good many years, in as humdrum a manner as any *bons bourgeois*. And they are highly respected in progressive society. Why they have never been legally married, I do not know. Possibly they have conscientious objections. But I do know that it would be monstrous to consider them immoral.

A union of this sort is called a civil marriage, although in Russia the celebration of marriages is left exclusively in the hands of the ecclesiastical authorities. Russian law, like the regulations of the British Army, does not recognize the fact that there are infidels.

One afternoon I happened to be in the law-courts and overheard a woman asking an official for the necessary permission to visit a prisoner.

"What relation are you to him?" asked the official amiably.

"Grazhdanskaya zhena, civil wife," she said in a matter-of-fact way.

"I'm afraid you are not entitled to a permit," said the representative of the law which knows nothing of civil wives, and the woman went away looking bitterly disappointed.

Enough has been said to show that the attitude of the Russians, believers and unbelievers alike, to the question under discussion is different from

that which ordinarily obtains among ourselves. "Nous, au fond de notre esclavage," runs a remarkable sentence in the preface to a book of essays by Merejkovsky and others; "nous n'avons jamais cessé d'être en secret des rebelles et des anarchistes." And I am inclined to think the statement is as true in a moral as it is in a political sense. The Russian chafes under moral restraint as he does under political restraint. And the heat of his ardour for Freedom is so great that he is impelled to cry aloud, without pausing to think of the consequences, that men should be allowed to do as they like. And so, if he does not actually disown the Christian code of morality, he is inclined to temper its severity by considerations that the theologians would be unable to ratify. He is apt to hold that he may do anything, provided that, in his opinion, his action is not harmful to another—a doctrine which is not peculiarly Russian. And he balances an acknowledgment of the weakness of the flesh with a belief in the boundless mercy of Heaven. Love may be an enemy, but he is an enemy too mighty not to make terms with, and too glorious to make those he wounds with his golden darts ashamed of their defeat. And there is a spell that is very commonly used in Russia to transform intrigue into romance and to obliterate irregularity of behaviour. It is simple and potent, a mere phrase: They love each other.

For good or for ill the Russians have acquired

greater freedom in the moral than in the political sphere. Yet here they have won considerable victories that may be sung without misgiving. I propose to do no more than celebrate the triumphs of late years, and to do so by drawing a contrast between the condition of Russia when I first went to live in that country and its condition at the present time. It is a task from which I cannot excuse myself; for the Russians themselves consider the perseverance and success with which, as I am about to narrate, they have forced their way along the path of progress more creditable to them than are the qualities of heart for which they are more often praised by foreigners.

It was at the end of 1904 that I went to live in Russia. At that time the Crown exercised autocratic power in temporal and also in spiritual affairs. The nation had no part in the government of the empire, and the exercise of the most sacred right of man, the right to obey the dictates of the mind and the behests of the conscience in the choice of a religion, was denied to the Russian people. The Russian subjects of the Tsar were not only required to give unquestioning obedience to the laws he imposed, but also to believe as he believed and to pray as he prayed. It was a criminal offence to leave the Orthodox Church, and the punishment for this crime was exile to Siberia. The inclusion of non-Russian races in the empire and the settlement of foreigners in Russia induced the State to concede a measure

POLISH PILGRIMS TO THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF CZENSTOCHOWA.

of tolerance to their religions. The magnanimity of the Crown allowed Dutch Protestants, Armenians, Lutherans and Catholics to build churches in Petrograd along the Nevsky Prospect, which thus acquired the name of the Street of Tolerance. The Poles and Lithuanians, with the exception of Catholics of the Greek rite, were allowed to practise their religion, and a part of the endowments of the Polish Church, which had been confiscated by the Government, was allocated for the payment of the Catholic bishops and clergy of Poland. The Esthonians, Letts and Germans of the Baltic provinces were free to remain Lutherans. The British factory maintained an Anglican Chapel, and although Alexander II was unwilling to allow British Nonconformists to have a church in Petrograd, he yielded to their request when they informed him that their religion was that of the Americans. Armenian Monophysites, Jews and Mohammedans had the right to worship Almighty God in the manner they approved. Parents belonging to non-Orthodox confessions were not debarred from initiating and educating their offspring in the religion they themselves professed. It was due to this right that Russians were occasionally to be met who, having inherited their respective creeds from non-Russian ancestors, were Catholics, or Lutherans, or even Anglicans unable to speak English. Count Nesselrode, once minister of foreign affairs, was, for example, a member of

the Church of England. The privileges of non-Orthodox religious bodies were circumscribed by the law, and their activities restrained, by the officials of the Department of Foreign Faiths. The right to baptize Mohammedans and Jews belonged to the Orthodox clergy alone. There was one curious exception to this rule: the Anglican pastor of Varshava was given the privilege of receiving converts from Judaism. Thus the Polish capital became a clearing-house for Jews who preferred the principles of Protestantism to those of Orthodoxy. They came to the pastor from all parts of the empire, were instructed and baptized, and, on their return to their homes, usually allied themselves with one of the Lutheran or Calvinistic bodies. This was the most notable instance of tolerance in the Russian empire.

Under these conditions, which prevailed in Russia until 1905, it is clear that the Orthodox Church was entitled to the name often bestowed on her in official documents and was justly called the Dominating Church. The greatness of her power and the manner in which the State supported her clergy, even when they resorted to the most contemptible means to extend her empire, must be understood in order to appreciate the triumph of Liberty I am about to describe. It may be useful to give a concrete instance of the spiritual tyranny exercised by the Church in combination with the State.

A Polish baby, the daughter of parents of good family, was kidnapped in the streets of Varshava by devout Russians, taken to a Russian church, baptized, and, having been legally registered as a member of the Orthodox Church, returned to its parents. They were told what had taken place, and, being Catholics, were greatly distressed. In order to circumvent the law they sent the child abroad, as soon as she was old enough to go to school, hoping that in her absence the authorities would forget that she was, in the eye of the law, a member of the Russian Church. The girl returned to Poland when her education was finished, worshipped with her parents, and in due course was married according to the rites of the Catholic Church. The authorities took no action and the girl's parents were satisfied that the fatal baptism had been forgotten. The young wife had a child and it was christened. Then the law stepped in. The mother was accused of the crime of causing her child to be baptized in the Catholic Church, whereas, being herself Orthodox, she was required by law to have the child baptized in the Orthodox Church. The summons to answer this grave charge in a court-of-law was addressed to her in her maiden name, and she was brutally described, in language which I do not care to reproduce, as being the mistress and not the wife of her husband. That, unhappily, was her legal status; for her marriage, not having been celebrated by an Orthodox

priest, was void. Knowing the severity of the law in the matter, the young couple hurriedly left Poland and settled abroad.

This episode took place fifty years ago; but I myself know a Polish peasant, a man of some thirty-eight years of age, who had been kidnapped in the same manner and baptized when he was a baby. He laughed as he told me that when the kidnappers returned him to his mother and triumphantly told her what had happened, she put him in a bath, gave him a good soaping, and threw the suds to the pigs. But he was grave when he said that he had been obliged to go into Galicia to be married according to the Catholic rite, that his marriage was not recognized by the law, and that his children were therefore considered illegitimate. On his passport he was described as a bachelor and a member of the Orthodox Church.

This account of the religious situation in Russia eleven years ago, and these tales, throw into relief the splendour and courage of the action of Nicholas II in April 1905, when he bestowed the inestimable gift of religious liberty on his subjects. That he needed courage to destroy with a stroke of the pen the imposing and ancient façade of intolerance, behind which Orthodoxy sat at ease, is evident in the light of our own history. What proposal to encroach on the privileges, given by the State to the clergy of this country, has not been resented by them and led to bitter-

ness and division in the nation? The proposal to admit to the universities youths who were unable to accept the doctrines of the thirty-nine articles of religion, to allow nonconformist divines to read prayers over their dead in the graveyards of parish churches, to disestablish the Welsh Church—these and other proposals of a like nature have invariably aroused the hostility of the clergy and of a section of the laity. Such being the case in England, it can be readily understood that in Russia, where the established Church is more powerful and the proportion of the nation that performs the practices of religion far larger than in this country, so startling an encroachment on the privileges of the Church as the introduction of religious liberty was bound to excite the keenest resentment. And the Tsar had to act alone. He could not shelter himself, as Queen Victoria did when she reluctantly signed the bill providing for the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, behind a parliament, for there was no parliament to afford him protection. He knew that the anger of the clergy and the conservative elements of the nation would fall on him alone. It is to the lasting credit of Nicholas II that he did not flinch at the prospect of the storm he knew that his action would evoke; but the glory of a great reform is not his alone. It belongs in part to the progressive ranks of the nation; for the Emperor could hardly have acted as he did, had he not been assured of the

support of a considerable section of the Russian people.

That the Manifesto of April 1905 made a real, and not a sham, reform may be seen in the following extract from a report issued by the Procurator of the Holy Synod—

> "Between 17th April, 1905, and December 1907, in 9 dioceses of the south-west, 170,936 persons left the Orthodox Church for the Catholic; in 14 dioceses of the Volga, the Urals and Siberia, 36,299 persons embraced Mohammedanism, and in 4 dioceses of the Baltic provinces and Olenetz, 10,964 persons adopted the Protestant faith."

In another chapter I shall have occasion to speak of the relief that this measure gave to a multitude of humble people in the east of the Kingdom of Poland.

An enumeration of the events that immediately preceded the issue of the April proclamation might easily lead to a false conclusion. In January 1905, Port Arthur fell. In February the battle of Mukden was fought. In the same month the Tsar's uncle, the Grand Duke Serge, was assassinated. In view of these facts, it may be asked, was not the reform extorted from an unwilling sovereign by military disaster and revolutionary activity? That is a view I do not hold and have never held. Some years before the publication

of the April Manifesto the Tsar told Père Legrange, a French Dominican, that sooner or later religious liberty would have to be introduced into Russia. The disasters of the Japanese war and the unrest in the country provided him with an opportunity he welcomed to make a revolutionary change. His sincerity in the matter may be judged from an incident told me by a Polish acquaintance, which I will tell in my friend's words.

"The Tsar solved a difficulty for us," said the Pole. "As you know, my wife is Russian and, although I am a Catholic, we were married by an Orthodox priest. Accordingly, when we had a child, we were bound to have it baptized in the Orthodox Church. I must tell you that I have been married twice and my children by my first wife are all Catholics. So, when this baby arrived, I and my wife talked over the matter and came to the conclusion that it would be very inconvenient to have two religions in the family, and that if it could possibly be arranged we would have the child baptized by the Catholics. My wife had been governess to the imperial children, and she had made up her mind to ask the Empress to be the child's godmother; so when she went to the palace to ask her to do us this honour, she told her our wish and asked whether it could not be realized. The Empress agreed that it would be better to have all the children of the same religion, was uncertain whether the child could be legally christened by a Catholic priest,

and said she would ask the Emperor. He was in no doubt about the matter; he had given freedom of religion, he said, and the child could therefore be baptized in the confession which the parents desired. Accordingly the baby was christened by a Catholic clergyman and the Empress was sponsor."

I regret to state that in this transaction the Emperor and Empress were guilty of a flagrant breach of the law; but, from another point of view, I am happy to place their guilt on record, because it shows that their hearts, to use a homely phrase in commenting on a domestic tale, are in the right place.

Religious liberty is not yet as full in Russia as it is in our own country. Non-Orthodox clergymen, for example, are not allowed to carry on an active propaganda to spread their tenets. The spirit of persecution is not yet exorcised and some of the clergy still resent the loss of past privileges. The methods by which Eulogius, Bishop of Chelm, sought to drive the Uniats, Catholics permitted by Rome to have the Greek rite and a married clergy, into the Orthodox fold during the Russian occupation of Galicia, show that the clergy can only be restrained by the vigilance of the secular arm. I do not care to dwell on this subject, which is as painful to the vast majority of Russians as it is to Englishmen. It will suffice to say that the proceedings of this prelate led more than two thirds of the members

of the Imperial Duma to include in the list of reforms, which they desire to be made immediately, the complete cessation of religious persecution. But apart from this lamentable episode, there is the difference of light and darkness between the situation as it is now and as it was when I first went to live in Russia. And, as I have indicated, the credit for this beneficent reform must be shared by the Emperor and the Russian people.

Six months after the concession of liberty of conscience, the nation forced the Crown to establish a form of representative government. The glory of this great achievement belongs to the Russian people alone. They encountered to the last the opposition of the Emperor to their demands. In May 1905 the Russian fleet was annihilated in the battle of Tsushima. The spirit of rebellion was in the land. At that dark hour the Zemstvo Congress of Moscow, which was an assembly of representatives of all the local government boards of Russia, sent an urgent appeal to the Emperor to grant a constitution. A favourable reply was received, and in August a scheme for the creation of a representative body, to assist in the government of the country, was propounded in an imperial Manifesto. This concession, which had been given with a good grace, did not satisfy the national demands; for the body the Emperor proposed to create would have had consultative and not legislative functions. The nation flouted the proposal. The Emperor refused to go further,

and, in consequence, a deadlock ensued. Revolutionary activity continued unabated.

I would not care to affirm that the Emperor set great store on the conservation to himself and to his house of the prerogatives of autocracy. I should hesitate to assert that love of power made him refuse to abandon the godlike part of a monarch *cuncta supercilio moventis*. There is, I think, a widespread belief in this country that the autocratic power of the Russian Tsars was in itself evil. In the past people have denounced Tsardom with the same vigour and the same want of consideration that they have displayed when they have denounced Popery. Tsardom, like Popery, became a sinister term, calculated to make an honest Englishman shudder. Even a superficial knowledge of Russian history is sufficient to show one that the autocratic power of the Russian sovereigns has been, to say the least, one of the chief factors in making Russia great and mighty. The inheritor of that power might well hesitate before he abandoned it. He might well reflect that he would hardly bear the title of King of Poland, had the power of the Polish kings not been severely limited by their subjects. He could not fail to ask himself whether the renunciation required of him would be beneficial to his people. Whatever his private views about the ideal rule of a country, he might doubt whether the time had come to yield the helm of the state to the Russian democracy. I am aware

that I am passing into the realm of speculation, but assuming, as we have the clearest right to do, that Nicholas II was animated by a single-hearted desire to benefit his subjects, it can hardly be doubted that such considerations as have been indicated governed his refusal to comply with the wishes of the Russian people. The peasants call him Little Father, and I hardly think I am going too far if I offer the opinion that, faced with that urgent demand for constitutional liberties, that resounded over the Russian land in the summer and autumn of 1905, he felt like a father whose son, come to manhood, demands unaccustomed liberty, the right to come and go as he likes, the right to order his life as he wishes, without parental supervision or interference. Where is the parent who does not hesitate in this crisis in the life of a lad? Will it be wise to yield? Has the time come to concede the coveted latchkey? Supposing the boy comes to harm? But in the end it is always the boy who wins. And it was like that in Russia. The Russian people realized their strength and, glorying in it, determined that they would no longer be treated as children.

The instrument with which the Russian people finally extorted the concessions they demanded was a general strike. It began with a strike of the engine-drivers of the Moscow-Kazan railway, which was caused by a false rumour of the arrest in Petrograd of delegates of the railway men.

That false rumour was the spark that set all Russia ablaze. The strike of engine-drivers of a single railway developed into the most imposing strike which has ever taken place, brought the life of Russia to a standstill, and effected a change in the constitution of the state which it might have been thought that only a bloody revolution could have made.

How was this? The success of the general strike of October 1905 was due to the profound unrest throughout the empire and the conviction of almost every section of society that life in Russia would be unbearable, until the most drastic changes had been made in the system of government. The workmen were convinced that they would be unable to improve their economic position until the autocracy had been swept away. Their view is summed up in the saying of a mechanic: "The employers' oppression is multiplied tenfold by the double-headed eagle." The feeling of the peasants may be gauged by the revolutionary character of a resolution passed in the summer of 1905 by a congress at Moscow, which was attended by a hundred representatives of the Peasant Unions of twenty-two governments and by twenty-five representatives of the more educated classes. The resolution was as follows—

"That the land must be considered the common property of all the people, that private property must be abolished, that the Monastery, Church,

Imperial Estate, Cabinet and Tsar's lands must be taken without compensation, and that the land of private owners must be taken partly with and partly without compensation; that the detailed conditions of the mobilization of private lands must be defined by the coming Constitutional Convention or Constituent Assembly." [1]

This drastic resolution should be inwardly digested by anybody who is inclined to regard the Russian peasant merely as a naïve person with a picturesque habit of crossing himself before icons.

The workmen and peasants were not the only classes who felt the necessity for profound changes. The country gentry found themselves in a difficult position in view of the attitude of the peasants, and were ready to welcome any solution of the situation which would have quieted the unrest in the country. The professional and business classes, either on principle or for less lofty reasons, desired to see constitutional liberties granted. Numbers of professional unions had been formed and resolutions had been passed at meetings, or at banquets in cases when the police forbade meetings, in favour of a representative system of government.

[1] Quoted in Professor Mavor's *An Economic History of Russia*, vol. ii. The detailed history of the events which preceded the publication of the October Manifesto should be read in this admirable work, to which I am indebted for much information.

"How is it that I never hear you speak of your friend Princess X?" I once asked a woman with a pretty taste in Paris fashions.

"She worked at the post-office during the postal strike," was the answer. "Since then I have refused to have anything to do with her."

The answer may serve to show how wide was the circle of the movement begun by those engine-drivers of the Moscow-Kazan railway. The strike, which began on October 20th, spread to other railway lines with great rapidity. Five days later the only part of the empire with which Petrograd was in railway communication was Finland. The nation was on strike. Factories were empty. Schools were unattended. Bank clerks and numbers of Government officials refused to work. Petrograd became totally isolated. At night the cities of the empire were in darkness. There were no letters. There were no telegrams. There were no newspapers. Russia was a paralytic. And the Emperor and the ministers realized that they had a political revolution to deal with. Had they wished to crush it, they did not possess the necessary means; for they were deprived of the machinery for communicating orders to the civil and military authorities. They took the only course open to them. On October 30th (17th O. S.) the Manifesto of Liberties was issued by the Tsar. The promises made in that Manifesto have not all been carried into effect; but the legislative bodies it created are evidence

of the splendour of the victory won by the Russian people. Although the democratic character of the Imperial Duma has been impaired by a change in the franchise—in the light of the history of parliament in our own country I should not care to hazard the opinion that the change was unwise—yet it remains an assembly which exercises an effective check on the autocratic power of the Crown. No new laws are permanently imposed on the nation without its consent. From its tribune the administration of the country by the Government can be criticized, and is criticized, with the utmost candour. The Imperial Duma stands as evidence of the love of progress and the passion for Freedom that animate the Russian people. Go to the Russian House of Parliament, the Italian palace in which Catherine II and her Court danced minuets. Look around. Listen. This high assembly has no venerable history. Its rights have not been wrested from a sovereign by haughty nobles, by bishops, by the learned. This has been called into being by engine-drivers, by black-handed workmen, by country yokels, by post-office girls and telegraphists, by doctors, lawyers, village school-teachers, children, by nihilists and country gentlemen, by anarchists and socialists and women who pray to icons. Do you want a proof of the Russian people's allegiance to Liberty? Do you want an assurance that you have been wise to seek the friendship of the Russian people? *Circumspice.*

And do not think that the Russian people will rest until they have caught us up, until they have outstripped us, in the path of progress. I saw the Tsar pass down the St. George's Hall of the Winter Palace, after he had pronounced the first speech from the throne that a Russian monarch has addressed to legislative assemblies. To his right the brilliant members of the Upper House cheered. To his left the sombre mass of the members of the Lower House was silent. *Le silence des peuples est la leçon des rois*, and in the recollection of that great silence, while the cheers of the Russian people are ringing in his ears, it may be presumed that Nicholas II will regard with sympathy the proposals now made by a majority of the present Imperial Duma. Let me set out the splendid list—

Home Rule for Poland.

A conciliatory policy regarding the Finnish question.

An amnesty for persons condemned for political and religious offences not of a criminal character.

The complete cessation of religious persecution.

The removal of restrictions on the Jews.

The recognition of the legality of trade unions.

And in considering that list, it should be borne in mind that the men who advocate these changes

form two-thirds of a Duma, representing the moderate elements of the nation, which has hitherto been considered pusillanimous and subservient to the wishes of the Government. The last elections, moreover, were supervised by a late Procurator of the Holy Synod, who made use of all the jerrymandering devices a convenient electoral law placed at his disposal. That the present Duma should urge these sweeping reforms on the Government is in itself a proof of the rapidity with which ideas, considered extreme ten years ago, have been assimilated by the Russian nation.

It will not surprise me if Nicholas II opens a Polish parliament in Varshava before George V opens an Irish parliament in Dublin. And I pray to all my saints that the British people may not receive this crushing humiliation.

You are beginning to think that the Russians are too venturesome? You are all for progress, but you believe that the slower the processes of progress the better? You begin to feel a little giddy at the rapidity with which the Russians abandon Byzantine for French manners and clothes, at the suddenness with which they substitute parliamentary for autocratic government? You ask whether, in the circumstances, it is quite wise, apart from the war, to be too intimate with them? You want to know where on earth they will get to and where they will land us?

These apprehensions, if they exist, I cannot

allay. That final question, if it be asked, I cannot answer. And I cannot even suggest that consolation may be found in the statement of a leader-writer of the *Times*, who pointed out that the demands of the Duma show the desire of the Russian people for orderly progress; since his inability to understand the spirit of the peoples of Russia is apparent in his employment of the word orderly. It is not in their genius to proceed sedately, as we have done, along the path of progress. Our elderly deportment seems absurd to them; they are young and prefer to take flying leaps. Let us beware lest they outstrip us and put us to shame. Is the day far distant when they will take us by the hand and lead us into a temple of Freedom, fairer than any we have seen, whose roof will be the sky and whose floor the holy Russian land?

IN POLAND.

CHAPTER IX

I HAD no kettle.

It was annoying. It was even exasperating. All the other passengers had kettles. There were three kettles on the rack at the end of the long carriage. Between me and the peasant with a fringe of straight yellow hair, who sat at the other end of the uncomfortable wooden seat, was a bundle done up in a chequered handkerchief; tied to it was a round, a perfectly new, a shining kettle. An old woman, whom I had seen lighting a candle before the holy icon in the booking-office, sat opposite the peasant. Her bundle was enormous. It contained, as she informed the peasant later, three cheeses and a large piece of ham, as well as her mattress, bedding, clothes, and an icon of the Kazan Mother of God, given her by her father forty years before, when he lay a-dying. And beside the enormous bundle lay an enamelled mug and a kettle. It was not a smart kettle. Its sides were battered and its surface dull; but I felt that the possession of it gave the old woman the right to be considered an experienced traveller.

And there was I without a kettle. It was most annoying! I had become weary of the city and had determined to flee from its artificiality and

to throw aside its restraints. For a brief space I would be as free and live as simply as any moujik. My portmanteaux had been sent to Varshava, the beautiful city which Englishmen call Warsaw, a hideous name they have learnt from the Germans, and I was to linger on the journey, stopping where I liked and when I liked. It had seemed so easy, when I left my rooms in Petrograd for the railway-station, to travel in a third-class railway-carriage, to be hail-fellow-well-met with my fellow-passengers and to pass as one of the crowd; but even before the train started my difficulties began. I was dressed in a black cotton blouse, black breeches, top boots and a round black cap with a peak. I imagined I looked like a workman with socialist views, and then I discovered that the effect I had desired to produce was spoilt by my neglect to bring a kettle. I was convinced that it was the absence of a kettle that made the man and the old woman look me up and down suspiciously. I hoped that they were merely asking themselves whether I was too poor to buy a kettle, or whether I was a thriftless person, prepared to buy expensive glasses of tea at wayside stations. Then I caught sight of my hands and felt ashamed. They did not look in the least like the hands of a workman. They looked useless hands, fit for nothing, as they say. I began to grow critical. My boots were too smart, the tops were too narrow, to pass muster in a Russian third-class railway-carriage. I hoped that I should not be obliged to put on my

overcoat, because it had a waist. I became an inverted snob. I wondered what the old woman would think of me if she knew that Phillipe, a Paris coiffeur, the only possible coiffeur in Petrograd, received a daily tip from me of twenty kopecks, that Miron, the hall-porter, regretted my absence because it deprived him of another daily twenty kopecks for opening the door of nights, that Vassili, who takes care of my hat while I lunch at the Hôtel de France, was also the poorer by twenty kopecks a day. Then I became conscious that the old woman was staring at the brown leather bag at my side. It was a shabby bag, but her glance made me certain that it gave me an exotic air, and I was certain that she was talking about me when she bent forward and spoke to the man.

An elderly peasant, with a long beard, and also a kettle, got in and took the place opposite me. Then the train started. Everybody made the sign of the cross. They made the holy sign from right to left. That was a thing which nothing in the world would have induced me to do. I would willingly have crossed myself from left to right, but to have made the gesture the opposite way would have been to deny my heritage of Latin culture. In the land of controversies about crosses, of discussions about the efficacy of crosses made with two fingers or made with three, of the propriety of Swiss crosses and six-limbed crosses, I felt as obstinate as a persecuted

Russian nonconformist of the seventeenth century and resolved to bear the scorn of my companions rather than simulate agreement with the doctrines of Photius and Michael Cerularius. I abstained from crossing myself, thereby placing myself under suspicion of infidelity. The old woman evidently noticed my lack of piety, and the expression of her face led me to suppose that she was of opinion that I should come to no good. Presently she leant back and closed her eyes.

"That's a nice bag you've got," said the elderly peasant opposite me. "I daresay you gave as much as twenty roubles for that."

"Twenty-five," I said truthfully.

"Twenty-five roubles," he repeated; "*vot kak!* and are you living in Petrograd?"

"Da, da, da," I said, which means yes, yes, yes.

"And how do you live?" he asked. "Have you a flat? or have you a room? or do you live in a family?"

I said I had a room.

"And are your parents alive?" he asked.

I nodded.

"And are they living in Petrograd?"

"No," I said, "they're in England."

"Very, very far away," he said. "Have you been in England?"

"Yes," I said; "I was there not very long ago."

"Horspidy!" he exclaimed. "Good Lord! And how were the crops looking on your way back?"

The young man with the yellow fringe of hair falling into his eyes appeared to interest himself in our conversation when he heard England mentioned. "And where are you going now?" he asked.

"I don't know," I answered.

"But you must know," he exclaimed, with such vehemence that the old woman opened her eyes. "Here's a young man," he said to her excitedly, "who's got into the train and doesn't know where he's going. Did anybody ever hear a thing like that?"

"He hasn't got a ticket," said the old woman laconically.

"That's it," said the young man; "he hasn't got a ticket."

"You haven't got a ticket," said the elderly peasant with the long beard, looking at me solemnly.

"Little dove," said the old woman, "it can't be done; I've tried it myself. The control on this train is something dreadful. Ticket-collectors keep asking for tickets, and they're controlled by inspectors, just to see they don't take any little bits of silver and do a good turn to poor folks. Many's the time I've travelled in the train all day for fifteen kopecks, and I don't know what we're coming to. And what poor people

who haven't money to buy tickets are going to do God knows! You'll be bundled out at the next station. And God be with you."

"But I have got a ticket," I said.

"Then you know where you're going to," said the elderly peasant.

"Of course," said the old woman.

"Then why make all this fuss?" said the young man; "why can't you tell us in a straightforward way where you're going to?"

"I tell you I don't know," I said rather tartly.

"Where's your ticket?" asked the young man.

It was not in the ticket-pocket of my breeches. It was not in either of the side pockets. It was not in the back pocket. My three fellow-passengers sat and watched me fumbling. The old woman and young man looked at each other in a manner that made it clear that they were certain they had caught me red-handed in an attempt to deceive them. Then I remembered that I had put my ticket in my cap and obliged them by producing it.

"Glory to God!" exclaimed the old woman.

I handed it to the elderly peasant. "I am unlettered," he said; "are you lettered?"

"I read."

"Good!" he said. "Read what is written on the ticket."

I uttered the three euphonious syllables that make the name—the musical, the romantic

name—of the capital of the kingdom of Poland, Varshava—put the stress on the second syllable, which rhymes with the Persian shah, and you will pronounce the name as well as any Pole.

"Varshava."

"Then you are going to Varshava," said the young man triumphantly.

"Tak," said the old woman, by which she meant "just so."

"Of course," said the elderly peasant.

"I suppose I shall finally arrive in Varshava," I admitted; "but I'm not going there straight."

"Then where are you going?" persisted the young man; "that's what I'm trying to get at."

"I told you I don't know; when I'm tired I shall get out of the train."

"Poor thing!" murmured the old woman.

"And what's your business?" said the young man.

"I'm a writer."

"And what do you write?" he asked.

"Books."

"Poor thing!" murmured the old woman and sighed deeply.

It was my turn to catechise. In England one spends time and ingenuity in trying to find out the status of casual acquaintances. One may know people for years without discovering how they gain their livelihood, who their relations are, or what their religion is. In Russia, not only in third-class railway-carriages but also in all but

the most fashionable circles, unhappily tainted by European tact, one may ask point-blank questions without any fear that they will be considered impertinent. To abstain from doing so betokens lack of interest and sympathy.

"What have you been doing in Petrograd?" I said to the peasant with the long beard.

"Selling hazel-hens."

I asked him how many he had sold, and what prices he had got, my inquiry being dictated by politeness rather than by curiosity. And presently I turned the conversation to politics, having learnt in Petrograd that not a peasant in the length and breadth of the Russian empire was not interested in them.

"I went to hear a debate in the Duma the other day," I said.

"Vot kak," he said, in a manner which convinced me that he was not in the least impressed.

I asked him who was the member for his constituency. He did not know. He did not care. He was, in point of fact, a happy peasant. The great lady of his village, it appeared, had sold a great tract of land to the peasants at such a cheap rate that they were able to pay her by felling the trees and selling them to a timber-merchant.

"I have all the land I want," said the happy peasant, and thus explained his lack of interest in politics.

I had seen an aged moujik go into the tribune of the Duma and heard him cry, as he waved his

thin hands above his grey head: "The land is ours and we are going to have it." In that statement he summed up his political creed. And I should be greatly surprised were I to discover that that aged man had sufficient land to provide for the needs of himself and his family. My friend, the happy peasant, had all the land he wanted, and being, like peasants all the world over, an unconscious egoist, failed to interest himself in questions which were agitating the minds of others. What business of his was it that peasants at the other end of Russia, or peasants in the next village, were craving for more land? And what did it matter to him whether liberty of the press, liberty of person, liberty of union and liberty of assembly were established in Russia? Students and workmen, and other irreligious persons in cities, might desire such things; that was their concern. Let them have these privileges if they could get them; and God be with them. And whether they got them, or whether they did not, the peasant with enough land for himself and his wife and his children would remain the happy peasant.

The train stopped. The old woman opened her eyes. She commandeered the young man with the fringe of yellow hair which, at the moment, he happened to be combing.

"Boiling water," she said; "for the love of God, boiling water," and she shook a little tea into her kettle from a screw of paper.

The young man said nothing, took the kettle, ran to the little refreshment room, and returned with boiling water just before the train started.

"God be with you," said the old woman as she took the kettle from him, and she poured a flaxen stream of weak tea into her enamelled mug. Then she put a lump of sugar in her mouth and began to drink.

"Is tea wanted?" she asked, when she had done, looking at the young man who had wisely neglected to make tea for himself.

He nodded.

"If you please, drink, if you please," said the old woman, handing him the mug.

The happy peasant refused tea, so did I, and presently we both dozed off to sleep. When I woke up I found that I was alone in the carriage, and I lay down at full length on the wooden seat. Somebody came into the compartment, but I did not trouble to open my eyes until I felt the stranger touch my arm and heard a voice requesting me to be amiable. I looked up and saw that a rather pretty girl was standing at my side.

"Please be amiable," she said; "I cannot get up the window in my compartment, and it is getting cold. It is near sunset. Please be so amiable as to help me."

I got up and followed her along the corridor. There was nobody in her compartment. I hoped that my strength would be equal to making the obstinate window yield, and never have I found a

railway-carriage window that shut so easily as that window of the third-class carriage in the train from Petrograd to Varshava. Realizing what was required of me, and pleased at the ingenuity of the lonely girl, I sat down in the place opposite her and began to make conversation. Her parents, I learnt, lived in the heart of the forest, of which her father was the guardian. She said she did not love the forest and wished to be always in the town. She had been a housemaid in Petrograd, and she was going home because her sister was married and her mother needed her; and Petrograd, she told me, was the most beautiful place on the earth, and nothing in Petrograd was more beautiful than the Zoological Garden at night, when it was lit up by thousands of little lamps, white and yellow and blue and pink.

"But this is more beautiful," I said, indicating the forest we were passing and the sky stained crimson by the sunset.

"I like the Zoological Garden best," said the girl, and told me that at home she would sit all day long and sew, and that there would be nobody to speak with except her father and mother.

I told her that I was leaving the city because I was weary of it, and hoped that I might spend the last weeks of the summer in a Polish forest. And she laughed, and told me I was mad, and laughed again until I laughed too. She left me at a wayside station.

I watched her going up the white road, radiant in the sunset, and knew that in her heart were thoughts of the pink and yellow lamps of the Zoological Garden. And she disappeared among the trees of the enchanted pine forest, between whose slender trunks were glimpses of the flaming sky.

A PEASANT BOY.

CHAPTER X

THE train glided into the station of Pskov. The summer evening was cold and I was weary, so I determined to get out and spend the night in a town which some of my Petrograd acquaintances had warned me not to visit.

"Don't go to a place like that," they had said; "a dirty, tumble-down place with pigs running about in the streets. Go to Odessa, if you want to see a fine Russian city."

And the description they gave of that city deprived me of any wish I had ever had to see it. Odessa, it appeared, was a city of boulevards, magnificent modern buildings, splendid blocks of flats, as fine as any in Europe, and the service of electric trams was unsurpassed. They might have been describing Berlin.

There are no electric trams at Pskov. Outside the railway-station I hired a cab, which looked like a broken-down Paris fiacre, and told the creature on the box to drive me to an hotel which the guide-book assured me was excellent. A few yards from the station the creature stopped in the middle of the road, apparently from mere caprice, and began to fumble in the obscure pockets of the garments he wore under his outer covering, a long cloth robe like a dressing-gown

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said, and continued to fumble.

"Drive on, little brother," I said, after watching his ineffectual search a long minute.

"No matches," he said, and turned round and looked at me sleepily. "Has the Barin any?"

It had occurred to him that there are fines for wicked cabmen who drive about the streets at night in cabs with unlit lamps. I gave him matches and with difficulty he induced a greasy lamp to burn. Then we set off again down the long road from the station in the country to the hotel in the town. When the creature went to sleep, as he occasionally did, I punched him from behind and called him by endearing names. He resented neither cruelty nor endearment.

At the hotel I found a stout landlady behind the *zakousky*-bar, the bar for appetizing snacks, in the restaurant, a large room with tables on which stood gilt candelabra. She fed me with a morsel of raw herring and a pickled mushroom and sent me to the room she considered appropriate for a person of my condition. When the servant who had shown me to it had gone away, I unpacked my things, sat down for a little, and then began to look about me.

The room was a large and dreary apartment with two beds. I disliked it and, for no reason, felt unhappy in it. There seemed to be some sinister influence about the place. I got up and walked about, examining the furniture and the walls, and at every step I became more uneasy

and more certain that I should be unable to sleep. I was convinced that I was in a haunted chamber. Not that I expected to see a Grey Lady emerge from the wall. Rooms in Russia are not infrequently haunted by more awful beings than ghosts. I peered behind a piece of the dirty wall-paper that hung loose and flapped in the draught from the window. Then I put my belongings in my bag and rang the bell.

"I cannot stay in this room," I said to the man who came. "There are klops."

I am aware that I shall be asked what a klop is. I know my manners and nothing on earth will induce me to say. In Russia one may talk about klops without embarrassment or shame. They are the subject of antique jests on the stage. But were I to translate the familiar Russian word into its English equivalent, the refined reader would undoubtedly put down this book, refuse to read another page, and denounce me as a person lacking in delicacy of feeling.

"We have no klops," said the servant.

"Look behind that piece of torn paper on the wall," I said sternly.

He did as he was bidden. Then he turned to me with an air of triumph. "They are not living," he said; "they are dead."

"If there are dead ones, there are doubtless living ones," I said. "You can take my bag downstairs."

He looked at me in a bewildered way and followed me out of the room.

"And why aren't you staying?" asked the large landlady, when I asked her how much I had to pay for using her room for half an hour.

"There are klops in the room you gave me," I said.

She repeated the stereotyped phrase of Russian landladies. "We have no klops," she said.

"I have seen them," I said impressively, looking her straight in the eye.

She received my statement without emotion. She did not impugn my veracity. She was neither horrified at my discovery nor indignant at my accusation.

"Why not take another room?" she said.

I refused.

"Many counts and barons stay here," she said, with great dignity.

Even that appeal did not move me. I paid her and hurried out of the hotel, stared at by a group of servants who were obviously under the impression that I was mad. It was nine o'clock and I wandered down the broad street in search of a lodging. The name of the Hôtel de Palermo was too exotic, and besides, as I passed it I heard somebody within tinkling ragtime on a cracked piano. I was not attracted by the placard on which were painted the words Londonskaya Gastinitza and also the words Hôtel de Londres. Being English, I felt the Parishkaya Gastinitza, also described as the Hôtel de Paris, more alluring.

The Hôtel de Paris was not an hotel. It was one of those lodging-houses, to be found in all

Russian towns, in which one may hire a room but cannot dine. Up the steps I went and into the hall. A tall boy, who looked about seventeen, came towards me. He wore a dilapidated baize-green blouse and frayed trousers. He had a mop of curly black hair, laughing eyes and bare feet.

"Hail," he said.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"I am the lackey," he answered.

"I want a nice room without klops," I said.

"We have no klops," he replied, with a touch of pride in his voice. "If you please," and he led me along a bare passage to a large room, which contained two beds, a washstand, a table, and six uncomfortable chairs covered with dusty tapestry.

"And the Barin would like the samovarchik, the dear little samovar?" he suggested.

And when he had gone to fetch it, a girl in a brown skirt and a loose print jacket, and without shoes or stockings, came into the room to put sheets on the bed.

When she went away the boy came back with the samovar, the cheerful, lovable samovar. He put the spluttering, purring thing on the table and then fetched a little teapot, a glass and spoon.

"How do they call you, little dove?" I asked, as I took a screw of paper containing tea and another containing sugar from my bag.

"They call me Dmitri," he said.

"Do you belong here?"

"I come from the village, Barin," he answered.

"And what made you come to the town?"

"There, in the village, many mouths, little bread."

"And it pleases you, life here?"

"Dreary, little to be earned," he answered, and filled the teapot for me and set it to keep warm on the top of the samovar. "Wish to go to Petrograd," he continued. "There life is rich, broad, and much may be earned."

I dismissed him, drank two or three glasses of golden tea, smoked a couple of slender cigarettes and glanced at the local paper, *Pskov Life*. The perusal of that organ of public opinion gave me a desire to talk with its editor, and I went out to go to his office.

"Darling," said an ancient man, of whom I asked the way; "go straight up the street and take the first turning to the left."

His voice was like a benediction. I followed his counsel and went half a mile out of my way.

The office of the *Pskov Life* was a small flat, and, at an hour when a thousand tempers are being lost in Fleet Street, the editor found time to take me into a parlour for a gossip, leaving the paper, that was to tell the news of the world to the citizens of Pskov on the morrow, in the care of two young men and the printers. He was a man of forty, dressed as I was, except that his blouse was crimson instead of black. He wore his thick, brown hair brushed back from his forehead, like Maxim Gorky, whom he somewhat resembled. Even had I not read his paper, his

appearance would have made me certain that he advocated a liberal and progressive policy in its columns. Nothing more appropriate than that the editor of a Pskov newspaper should advance democratic principles; for in the old times, when the city was the centre of a flourishing republic, which had joined the Hanseatic League, the city council rivalled the prince in authority, regarded him as the paid servant of the State, and turned him out and chose another ruler in his place if he proved unsatisfactory. The ancient glory of Pskov is gone, but it can still boast of sturdy citizens whose attitude to the Emperors, who are also Grand Princes of Pskov, is the same as was that of their forefathers to bygone rulers whose bodies lie in the white cathedral on the cliff that rises from the waters of Lake Peipus. "Our city," they can say, "was great, when Moscow was the least of all the cities of Rus; here we flouted Moscow when Yaroslav and Rostov and Novgorod bowed before her; here we withstood the pretensions of princes when the Tsaritsa Sophia, daughter of Byzantine emperors, puffed up her husband's pride and Moscow was enslaved by an autocrat; here was the last home of Liberty in the holy Russian land."

The editor and I fell to talking politics. He was against the Government then—I am writing of a time before the war—and I have not a shadow of a doubt that he is heart and soul with the Government now in its determination to wage

the war until the might of the Germans is crushed. I have not the advantage of reading the *Pskov Life* now, but I should be greatly surprised if my friend, the editor, has not more than once, in the course of patriotic leading articles, encouraged his fellow-citizens by reminding them of the glorious victory gained by Alexander Nevsky, saint and prince of Novgorod—who can withstand God and Lord Great Novgorod?—when out on the lake that lies between Pskov and Dorpat, between the Russian lands and the German lands of the Tsar, he defeated the proud Teutonic Knights in the Battle of the Ice. And because I know the editor to be a good Russian and a patriot, I am certain that he published gleefully and with sorrow in his heart the speeches made by the least extravagant and most capable members of the Imperial Duma, in which they denounced those evils of administration and management that impeded the due prosecution of the war and led to the withdrawal of General Sukhomlinov from the Ministry of War and of Mr. Maklakov from the Ministry of the Interior.

And I questioned the editor about some silly schoolboys, who had been accused of dabbling in revolution and were at the time shut up in the prison of the city. He told me a dreary story. The prison was unhealthy; one boy, an Esthonian from the other side of Lake Peipus, was dangerously ill—"You can have his body if he dies," they had told his mother when they refused to let her see him—and he gave me the back numbers

of his paper that dealt with the case, a flimsy affair of accusations denied by the boys and supported by little better evidence than the discovery of socialistic tracts in lockers and drawers of humble homes.

"Thus it has happened, what can one do?" said the mother of one of the prisoners to me the next day. She was a tired-looking woman who kept a small shop.

"Glory to God! my son was set free two days ago," said another mother, and she was so glad that she showed no resentment at the imprisonment of an innocent boy, who had not had the opportunity of answering the charges brought against him in the court of law, for several months in a wretched gaol.

And a brother of one of the older lads told me that the boy had been sent to Siberia by administrative order.

"You must look forward to the day when he will come back," I said, not knowing what to say.

"He will never come back," said the young man gloomily.

This is how they make the revolutionists of the future in the good city of Pskov.

At the time, I wrote a long account of those boys in one of the English newspapers, as I told the editor I should do. And weeks afterwards he wrote and asked me for my article, which, he said, would be most useful to him. That touched me. It was one of those indications,

which I have often had reason to remark, of the character of the friendship of the Russian people for the British nation before ever diplomatists talked of an *entente*, or the common aim of defeating the same foe made Russians and Englishmen brothers. To the Russians the English are champions of Liberty, and they hold that British influence and British example will help and support them in the task they have set themselves of establishing political Liberty in their own country. They know that their Government and its agents are sensitive to foreign criticism, and the editor of Pskov was evidently aware that an account of the process by which a parcel of hot-headed boys were being transformed into embittered and dangerous malcontents was unlikely to pass unheeded by the officials who had initiated it. Nothing more admirable than the tenacity and courage with which the editors of the provincial newspapers of Russia remain at their posts and carry on their important work. On them rely millions for information about affairs of Russia and foreign countries and for political guidance. The size of Russia makes an universal circulation of the newspapers of the two capitals impracticable. Moscow looks disdainfully at the Petrograd press. And who in Odessa desires to read newspapers from the Neva with the stale news of two days ago? In provincial towns it is the local press that is chiefly read, and, far away from the capital, provincial Governors make the life of editors a burden. During the last few years, when no

formal censorship existed, numbers of newspapers were squeezed out of existence by the fines inflicted on their editors by arbitrary officials. An article that would pass muster in one town would be considered improper in another, and the editor of the newspaper who sanctioned its publication be mulcted in a fine, or, in the event of his inability to pay, sent to prison. Nothing easier in the circumstances than to suppress a newspaper. The Governor who disliked the political tendencies displayed by an editor had only to multiply fines until the capital of the paper could stand the strain no longer, and the editor was obliged to cease publication for want of funds. I pay homage to the men, be they advocates of reaction or advocates of progress, who have persisted in their difficult work in spite of persecution. Courage, brothers! from the bloody plains of Poland spring the flowers of Liberty, and already their petals are unfolding.

With thoughts of the past in my heart, I returned by the silent streets of the city to the Parishskaya Gastinitza. Through the glass pane of the front door I saw a girl, fast asleep in a little bed. The Sleeping Beauty was so near me, that I might have awoken her with a kiss, like the prince in the fairy tale, had it not been that between her and me was the locked door. I pulled the bell which clanged above her head. She gave a little start, opened her pale eyes, got out of bed, fully dressed in the brown skirt and print blouse which she was wearing when she

made my room ready for the night, and let me in. Then she got into bed again. I turned to look at her when I was half way down the corridor and saw that she was already sleeping.

And the next day I loitered, strolling down the broad street, in which some of the houses had apple-green roofs, to the market-place, where brilliant peasant-women sold vegetables and fruit and pots and pans—one of them wore a bright blue petticoat and an orange bodice. Men who looked as if they had stepped out of the Bayeux tapestry were strolling about. A blouse of faded mulberry-coloured linen, worn with *vieux rose* breeches, appeared to be fashionable among them. Their feet and the lower part of their legs were swathed in puttees of white linen, crossed to the knee with the leathern thongs of their bark shoes or leather sandals. And I visited the celebrated linen-draper. He did not, as I had been led to believe, sell curiosities as well as haberdashery. He was a connoisseur, and not a dealer, in antiquities, and he invited me to see his collection. We left the shop, where ladies of Pskov were buying ribbons and laces, and went upstairs to the museum in which the linen-draper and his family live. There were three parlours, in one of which a table was set for dinner, and on their walls were ranged shelves filled with a thousand things that made one break one commandment and desire to break another. There were carvings and swords and ancient icons and coins and sealed earthen jars con-

taining coins, money put by for a rainy day centuries ago, seen through a hole in the side of the vase. And the linen-draper was as reluctant to unseal the jars and to examine the coins as is an amateur of books to cut the leaves of a first edition and read the contents. And by the side of icons of the Virgin, amidst the treasure-trove of the countryside, were curiosities from a foreign land, pictures of Louis Wain cats. The linen-draper was an elderly man, thin and very grave, but his eyes shone when he pointed out this treasure and that.

Pskov is cut into three parts by two rivers, the Pskova and the Vilika. On the high ground between them, at the point where they unite and form a mighty stream that is an arm of Lake Peipus, is the Kremlin, surrounded by a wall, built in days of grandeur when St. Alexander Nevsky's son had been but three years prince of Moscow, an upstart place that was then of no account to the Republic. Within the walls is the high cathedral of the Holy Trinity, like an oblong box, painted white and stood on end, with five grey domes, the shape of onions, set on the top, a big one in the middle and a smaller one at each angle. And the big dome and two of the small ones are perched on turrets pierced by windows that give light to the interior. The cathedral is not ancient—it was built in the time of Peter the Great—but it stands on ground where prayer has been accustomed to be made from the first years of the sanctification of the

Russian land. They say that St. Olga, the first Christian princess of Russia, built the first of the churches that stood where the present cathedral stands, on the edge of the cliff from which I looked down to the waters where fishermen's boats were sailing to the open reaches of the lake, treacherous as the lake of Galilee.

In Russia it is not possible to judge of the interior of a church by its exterior. I have been into churches that were beautiful without, and within were divided into two storeys, forming two churches, great rooms with flat ceilings and garish decorations. Neither past experience nor the architectural poverty of the exterior prepared me for the glorious interior of the cathedral in the Kremlin of Pskov. Four gigantic pillars supported the arches of the high roof, whose blue cupolas were powdered with stars, and the harmonious colouring of the screen between the sanctuary and the nave, rich with ancient icons, reminded me of the beautiful work of the late Mr. Bodley. An old woman was praying by the silver tomb of St. Gabriel, a prince of the Republic in the twelfth century. From the roof hung a sword, suspended in mid-air at the end of a cord; it was wielded once by St. Dovmont, a Lithuanian who was christened on that spot with his family in 1266 and afterwards reigned in Pskov. His successors, whose coffins lie in the crypt of the cathedral, were all invested with that sword when they were crowned in the cathedral. For more than four hundred years it has

rusted in its sheath and is now a relic of past magnificence and bygone liberty, like the title of Grand Prince of Pskov which the passport in my pocket attributed to the Tsar along with a list of other titles: Grand Prince of Suzdal, Grand Prince of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Vladimir, Polish Tsar, and many others, that might serve for an epitome of the history of the unification of Russia.

The old woman ended her orisons by the silver tomb of St. Gabriel and fell to kissing icons, of which there will be much to say hereafter. And as for me, I went to a tavern and partook of borsh. You know what borsh is? You have supped delicately on it in fashionable London restaurants? Permit me: they deceived you, they gave you nothing more than a cup of feeble borshok, and that is a very different matter. To begin with, borsh is not a dish to be eaten in the presence of elegant persons. Just as it is best to eat ripe mangos while sitting in a bath, so it is best to consume borsh in a low tavern, where table manners are of no account, or, if that be impossible, in solitude. This will be readily understood when it is pointed out that in a bowl of borsh, a succulent and bright red soup, lie concealed (1) a thick slice of beef or mutton, (2) a quantity of shredded beetroot, (3) a substantial piece of ham, (4) one or two bay-leaves, (5) a couple of sausages; nor does this list embrace the names of all the substances included in a portion of borsh, for there are

brought with it in separate dishes, so that the consumer may add the amounts experience and taste dictate, (6) thick, sour cream, (7) baked buckwheat, and possibly, though this is not essential, (8) little pies of the most substantial sort of paste, stuffed with meat or cabbage or fish or eggs, which, for the sake of clarity, it must be added, are on no account to be added to the collection of substances already in the soup, but are intended to be eaten instead of bread. It is not a dish to dally with gracefully, and it promotes neither flirtation nor an epigrammatic style of conversation. It is a serious, an essentially manly, dish, due to the virile genius of the Little Russians, and for its consumption a spoon, a knife and a fork are required, and a napkin, sufficiently large to cover the upper portion of the body, is considered desirable by the fastidious. As a middle-class nobleman once remarked to me, when he found me dining before going to the opera and noticed that I had neglected to insert a corner of my napkin between my neck and my collar: "What a dreadful thing if you spoil the front of that perfectly clean shirt before starting!"

After the delicious lassitude that compensates one for the energy required to eat a portion of borsh had somewhat abated, I went across the Pskova by a bridge laid on boats, easy to move when winter comes and the river freezes. By the pathway along the grassy bank I went and came to a place where women were bathing.

They went into the water wrapt in white sheets from head to foot. They swam, they floated on their backs, and, by some process which I could not understand, they and their sheets were never parted and they issued modestly from the water in the clinging draperies which made them look like the women painted on Greek vases. At a suitable distance from the bathing-place of the women, naked youths stood by the river's bank. The white bodies of their comrades gleamed in the shining water. Some stood in the shallows, sunning themselves and chaffing those that were on the bank. Others swam across the blue river to the other side, above which rise the crumbling walls built to defend the Republic from Teutonic Knights, and back they swam and came from the water laughing.

Through the fields I went to a monastery, surrounded with a white wall, capped with apple green, and listened for a space to the placid hymns of a few singers and bearded monks, who stood in the midst of their church to sing vespers as their predecessors had done in the glorious days of the city. And thinking, as I listened to the pale music, of the laughter by the river's brink, I felt as if I had passed without a pause from the reading of the Charmides to a sermon written by Chrysostom.

Back in the lodging-house that calls itself the Hôtel de Paris, I saw through the kitchen door Dmitri putting lumps of red-hot charcoal from the stove into a samovar.

"You can heat a samovar for me," I called.

"This hour," he answered, putting a great chimney on the top of the samovar to make the fire within draw.

"Dmitri," I said, when he came with the tea-things; "would you like to go to a circus this evening?"

Dmitri frowned. There was, it appeared, far too much work to do to permit him to accept the invitation.

"Perhaps if I asked your master nicely, he might let you come," I suggested; "at any rate I'll try."

Dmitri showed no enthusiasm.

"Maybe you wouldn't care to go, even if you could," I said.

"It would be a good thing to go," he said gloomily, "but there is much work to be done."

"It's an Italian circus," I said.

"Dmitri's gloom disappeared in an instant and his eyes sparkled. "The Italian circus in the tent on the way to the station!" he cried. "I thought the Barin wanted me to go to church with him," and with that statement he humbled me to the dust by making it clear that I had pronounced a word so badly as to turn it into another word with a somewhat similar sound and a totally different meaning. All the same I was glad that a very bad mistake had given me a glimpse of the psychology of a Russian boy and shown me that it bore a close resemblance to that of many an English boy.

"I'm certain I can get through my work in plenty of time to go," continued Dmitri. "I shall be for ever grateful to the Barin if he will ask the master to let me go." Then his face clouded. "Perhaps he'll refuse," he said. "The Barin must speak to him very seriously."

Permission for the outing was somewhat grudgingly given by the landlord, and the delighted Dmitri and I set off to the circus. The boy had made himself smart, that is to say he had washed his face and put on boots.

"Trousers frightfully old," he said ruefully, "but Marsha"—she was the chambermaid—"has mended the hole in my blouse."

As we took grand seats in the first row, we were given about twenty-four tickets, like omnibus tickets in a long strip, so that we had twenty-four chances of winning magnificent prizes in the lottery with which the spectacle was announced to end. Dmitri loved being in the front row, especially as some of his friends were in the two-penny-halfpenny gallery and had therefore only one chance each of winning a prize. There were no wild animals and none of the performers did anything very dangerous, so the entertainment was not disagreeable. Indeed, the cinematograph made me almost sentimental, for it showed a British burglar being chased by two British policemen. Late in the evening the wife of the manager (in a plain riding-habit) rode round the arena on a fine horse, with an air that made one feel that it was exceedingly amiable of her to

have consented to do so. And then came the grand lottery, conducted by two clowns. Dmitri became flushed with excitement, his lips were parted, and his eyes anxiously followed the clowns, who were moving about in the arena, cracking jokes, and every few moments shouting out a winning number, drawn from a hat, and running off to give the prize to the winners. A dozen people had been made happy, including a man in the gallery, and Dmitri, with twelve tickets, grew more anxious every moment. A youthful officer, next him, seemed almost as anxious, though he was obviously trying to appear indifferent. The poor boy won a large glass sugar-basin and so did I. Dmitri's colour had gone and his face was almost green with apprehension when he found favourites of fortune on either side of him and saw, moreover, that the stock of prizes on the little table in the middle of the arena was almost exhausted. I began to share his fears and was relieved when the clown popped a lady's purse into his hands. He blushed crimson and sat back in his chair with a look of the utmost contentment on his face. I generously gave him my glass sugar-basin, and on the way home I learnt that the purse would be presented to a young person of the name of Avdotia on the following Sunday.

Next morning I left Pskov. When I was ready to start, Dmitri ran into my room, threw himself on his knees, caught my hand and kissed it.

"I want you to take me with you, Barin," he

said. "There in Petrograd is broad, rich life. It is dreary here. I will be the Barin's lacquey. I will work hard."

I told him that it was not possible for me to employ him, and, as I spoke, I saw that there were tears in his eyes.

"Zdyes skuchno, it's dreary here," he said, as I left him.

CHAPTER XI

IN the cathedral of Pskov I saw an old woman kissing icons. She kissed the little Christ, a babe in arms who had kicked off one of his little sandals. She kissed the Holy Virgin. She kissed Apostle Andrew the First Called. She kissed two Fathers of the Church. She kissed the Blissful Seraphim, who spoke to no man for thirty years. She kissed St. Olga, who, they say, tied burning matches to the tails of sparrows, that they might fly away and set fire to the houses of her enemies. She kissed the Blissful Yevrosinia, whose floating shrine not long ago ascended the broad Dnieper from Kiev to her ancient home Polotsk, in a triumph that a queen might envy. She kissed the Blissful Anna of Kashin, whom Peter the Great drove from the fellowship of the saints and Nicholas II rehabilitated. And she kissed the Blissful Irene, Empress and Defender of the Holy Images, "whose ambition and desire of rule—in the words of a formulary of the Church of England—was insatiable, whose treason, continually studied and wrought, was most abominable, whose wicked and unnatural cruelty passed Medea and Progne, whose detestable parricides have ministered matter to poets to write their horrible tragedies."

A LITTLE RUSSIAN.

I could not have brought myself to kiss the Empress Irene, for, in my opinion—I write under correction—her theological orthodoxy cannot condone her habit of cutting out the tongues of her relatives and of putting out their eyes. Nevertheless, I watched the proceedings of the old woman with sympathy. She was, I knew, from a sober English standpoint, an idolatress, but having a tendency to idolatry myself, I felt that a spiritual kinship existed between her and me. She loved her images, as I loved mine. She loved some better than others; for I remarked that she kissed some of them coldly, and others she kissed lingeringly or kissed twice and thrice. And, like her, I had my favourite images. I loved the Mother of God of the Gateway of Vilna better than the Mother of God of Czenstochowa, who is the Queen of Poland, the black image of Notre Dame de Chartres better than the smiling figure of Notre Dame de Lourdes. And neither I nor the old woman cared a straw that the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all bishops, parsons, vicars and curates of England held our images to be "great puppets and mawmets for old fools in dotage and wicked idolatry," as is stated in the aforementioned Homily against Peril of Idolatry, the finest piece of sustained invective in the language, which all these learned men have solemnly averred, or ever they were admitted to their offices, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine and necessary for these times. And yet as I looked at that sweet idolatress, and saw her

face that was wrinkled with care, and heard her sigh as she kissed the little Christ, I felt persuaded that even Queen Elizabeth, who ordered all those violent things to be read in the churches, would have been softened had she seen her, and would, at least, have abstained from telling her that her images were vanities, lies, deceits, uncleanliness, filthiness, dung, mischief and abomination before the Lord.

And I thought of that old woman and multitudes of men and women, whom I have seen cherishing their images in the holy Russian land, one night when I passed a stucco church of Primitive Methodists in the dreary suburb of an English town, and heard the people within praising God in a hymn that is known wherever the English language is spoken. I stopped to listen to their singing, and these were the words that floated into the dismal night—

> Art thou weary, art thou languid,
> Art thou sore distrest?
> 'Come to Me,' saith One, 'and coming,
> Be at rest!'

And as I heard the holy song, I realized the essential unity of the singers and those whom they would count idolatrous or, if modern gentleness makes them choose a softer word, superstitious. On their lips were the words of a monk of Greece, whose championship of the sacred images a thousand years ago was powerful to

conserve to the old woman of Pskov the right to venerate the picture of her Saviour in tranquillity.

> If I find Him, if I follow,
> What His guerdon here?
> 'Many a sorrow, many a labour,
> Many a tear,'

sang those melodious Methodists, and I wondered if they knew that the words were written to give consolation to men and women who were vilely persecuted and put to death by Christian emperors for their obstinate attachment to images. Those Emperors of Byzantium, Leo the Isaurian, Leo the Armenian, their courtiers and the bishops who flattered them by subservience, were not like the Reformers and Puritans of England and of Scotland, who overthrew and brake in pieces the images that the English and the Scotch used to love. The reasons that dictated the conduct of the iconoclasts of Constantinople were more subtle than those that influenced the iconoclasts of Great Britain. They were not primarily concerned with the literal interpretation of a law given to the children of Israel. They sought to drive from men's minds the belief that God became man, by depriving them of the sight of images of Him in the arms of Mary or on the cross, holding Him to be a spirit with the semblance and not the reality of a human body. And because St. Theodore of the Studium, who wrote the Methodists' hymn, with many learned men

and a multitude of simple people, believed that mankind would be deprived of its greatest consolation, were imperial hands to filch from its heart the belief that the Almighty had known human sorrow and human care, they defended the images that advertised His condescension.

> If I still hold closely to Him,
> What hath He at last?
> 'Sorrow vanquished, labour ended,
> Jordan past.'

They sang the words in the ugly stucco church to give themselves courage to bear the petty trials and contradictions they would encounter before they met together on the next Sabbath evening. And I asked myself if any of them knew that they were an inspiration to men and women who suffered tortures, wandered in savage exile, yielded up their lives at the hands of executioners, for the sake of the images before which they were wont to bow themselves. It was unlikely that they should know; but had they done so, they would have understood that in their hearts were the same thoughts that filled the hearts of strange monks, who burnt incense before pictures in the churches of the Holy Wisdom at Constantinople and Kiev and Novgorod, the same longings that animate unlettered Russian peasants or, for that matter, Irish soldiers and French *poïlus*, who burn candles before effigies. And I felt sorry that they did not know, and

thought of the old woman, who kissed the little Christ in the cathedral, walking hand in hand with a Methodist sister in the celestial garden.

In Russia they keep once a year a feast they call the Feast of Orthodoxy to commemorate the overthrow of the iconoclasts and the triumph of the vindicators of the holy images. There is no such feast in the West; for the heresy that lay at the root of iconoclasm did not affect the Latins, who had therefore not the same incentive to fill their lands with icons as had the Greeks, who taught the faith to the Russians. If a foreigner wants to know how it is that there is an icon in the bedroom of his hotel in Moscow and nothing more edifying than a ceiling with Venus and a train of cupids in the room they gave him in Rome, he must read the tedious history of the iconoclastic controversy. Had Leo the Isaurian not hacked down crucifixes in Constantinople, there would hardly be a wreath of electric lights on festivals around the picture of Nicholas the Wonder-worker in the booking-office of the Varshava station of Petrograd. Everywhere in Russia, icons; but there are icons that are more beloved than others and more reverenced.

Anna Ivanovna, who took me to the chapel in the house of Peter the Great, where the imperial icon of the Sorrowful Face of Christ is kept, told me that there was another icon in Petrograd which she loved still more.

"It is very odd," she said; "before that icon

I can pray better than anywhere else, and yet, if you asked me the reason, I could not tell you. I do not know. They call that icon our Lady of the Poor."

I asked her how it came by the name.

"There used to be an alms-box affixed to the wall of the Alexander Nevsky monastery," she said, "and above it was a picture of the Mother of God. One day there was a terrible thunder-storm. The alms-box was struck by lightning and the money in it thrown on the ground, except seven of the tiniest coins we have, so tiny that I do not expect you have ever seen them, for it is only the very poorest people who use them. The seven tiny coins had lodged in the silver halo round the head of the Virgin of the picture; so the people said: 'This is the Mother of God who loves the poor,' and they began to come in great numbers to pray before that picture, and they begged the priests to say prayers for them at that place. People came from all parts of the city, and the clergy had no rest. They made a great deal of money from the payments given them for saying prayers. And at last they were obliged to build a church for the icon, and there are always people there praying. There is no place in Petrograd where the people seem to pray so earnestly, and when I go there I cannot help praying well. It is a pity it is so far from my home."

"Now if I had heard a woman talking such

nonsense," said a capable Englishwoman to whom I repeated Anna Ivanovna's words, "I should have just taken her by the shoulders and told her to pull herself together. Such sentimentality is absolutely intolerable and ought to be dealt with."

Of course that able woman would have done nothing of the kind, had she actually met Anna Ivanovna; for Anna has a little air of unconscious dignity that would defend her from amiable impertinence. It is restful to be with her. And besides, a woman with grown-up children cannot be spoken to as though she were a chit of a girl. But were she asked to explain the power that our Lady of the Poor exercises over her, she would be at a loss to do so.

One summer morning Nijinski and I went to South Kensington, because he wished to look at Indian pictures and carvings in one of the museums in order to see the poses he must adopt in *Le Dieu Bleu*. And on the way home we went into the Oratory, and when we came out, that miraculous Polish boy, the radiant slave of the night before in Armide's bower, "qui s'ennuye en l'air," as a critic said of him, was silent.

"That church does not please me," he said suddenly, as we were whirled through a lilac-scented square.

"Why?" I asked.

"It does not make one feel one wants to pray," he said.

And in the dancer's reflection, balancing Anna Ivanovna's, lies the definition of the charm that certain shrines and certain pictures and statues work in the souls of men. In those churches, before those effigies, they find they possess a greater ability to abstract their minds from earthly things and to speak with heaven. That buildings and painted boards and stocks and stones possess this charm, an infidel, who has seen Christians at prayer in the places of pilgrimage scattered over Christendom or in the shrines whose fame has hardly spread beyond the walls of the cities in which they are beloved, will undoubtedly admit. But in what lies the charm whose existence cannot be denied? Anna Ivanovna, who is an educated woman, would laugh, if anybody accused her of thinking that there is any intrinsic merit or secret power in the piece of board, unskilfully smeared with paint, which they call our Lady of the Poor. What is its attraction for her? Balzac speaks somewhere of a forlorn village church, with a paltry curtain of red cotton over the east window and crude oleographs on the altars, and transforms the picture in a phrase, "parfumée de prières champêtres." And the phrase, I think, gives a clue to the secret of the magic of some churches and of some pictures. In those churches, kneeling before those pictures, the worshippers are, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by an atmosphere charged with sighs and prayers, with aspirations to earthly happiness, with conflicts waged with spiritual foes,

with petitions for daily bread, with regrets and bitterness, with heroic vows, with petty complaints, with acts of difficult renunciation, with combats between flesh and spirit, with flights from earth to the gates of Paradise, with desires for perfection, with all those parti-coloured emotions that rack and console the hearts of men. "A crucifix, beautiful; a cross, more beautiful; and most beautiful, nothing;" said Juan de la Cruz. There is the voice of a saint and a mystic at the summit of the scale of Christian perfection. But most Russians, like most of the Carmelite's fellow-countrymen, are not saints, but imperfect men and women, who know from experience, if they cannot account for it, the beneficent influence exercised upon them by the effigies that the perfect do not need.

I hold no brief to defend the religion of the Russians. I have seen its imperfection as well as its beauty. But it is impossible to find oneself, year after year, in contact with manifestations of religious feeling of a character that is foreign to English sentiment, without seeking to find some explanation of these phenomena. And in a book about Russia, whose pages must perforce be strewn with allusions to the shrines and sacred pictures that adorn the remotest recesses of the land, if it is to give a faithful impression, it seemed proper to attempt to offer some considerations that may suggest an explanation of the attitude of educated Russians, as well as that of unin-

structed peasants, to practices that are likely to appear childish to most Englishmen.

"The Russian religion is sheer idolatry," said a Polish priest to me. He was a clever man, with the air of a young Cambridge don, but his sweeping statement was not untainted with prejudice. Had he known her, he would, I am sure, have owned that Anna Ivanovna, votaress of our Lady of the Poor, is neither an idolatress nor a superstitious woman. That there is superstition among the common people, we should have agreed.

Three years ago a peasant, living in an isolated Siberian village, was clearing out some stones and rubbish that had lain for years on the floor of the cellar beneath his cottage. And as he worked, he found, buried under a heap of stones, an icon of the Virgin and the little Jesus. He had lived in the cottage for years, and knew nothing of the existence of the heavenly picture. And even if it had been in the cellar before his time, who in all the orthodox land would do so impious a deed as to heap stones on a holy icon? To the mind of Ivan there was but one explanation of his discovery: the icon had dropped from heaven and its presence in the cellar was a sign of Divine favour. He crossed himself and bowed before the Mother of God and the little Jesus. He knelt and kissed their faces, but he did not dare to move the picture. Who was he to take into his hands a gift from the Almighty brought by angels?

There was holy mirth that night in Ivan's

cottage, coming and going; for the news of the miraculous apparition spread quickly through the village, and every man and woman and child came to do reverence to the picture and to rejoice with Ivan and his family. Down into the murky cellar they went and praised the Lord for His goodness. Ivan's humility forbade him to think that the benediction of the icon was for his household alone. What had he done to deserve so signal a favour? The icon was a token of the especial love of God for all the village.

The nearest church was fourteen miles away, and on the morrow of the gladdest day that ever dawned on the village Ivan went thither to beseech the priest to return with him and place the icon in the village chapel, a little chamber with a window, through which passers-by can see the gilded icons within and the lamp that burns before them. And the priest, a man with a beard and long hair that made him look like the apostles in church windows, came gladly, and all the village met him. In his vestments and with a little censer in his hand, he climbed down the ladder into Ivan's cellar. The peasants followed him, and those for whom there was not room in the cellar stood in the living-room above or in the street. The priest censed the picture and chanted prayers, and all the villagers bowed and crossed themselves many times. Then the holy man lifted up the precious icon, blessed the people with it, and bore it to the little chapel. All followed him in silence, and those

who could kept a finger on the sacred picture as they moved in the procession. The priest placed the icon in the chapel, and all the people stood without and worshipped while he chanted a molyeben. And when he had done, he turned and addressed the villagers, telling them that a village chapel, in which the liturgy was not celebrated, could not be considered a suitable home for a miraculous icon, and that he would return in a few days and take it to be placed in the distant church he served.

There was consternation among the villagers. Were they to be robbed of the heavenly treasure the Almighty had been pleased to send them? The thought was intolerable, and they told their pastor plainly that nothing would induce them to part with that blessed picture of the Virgin and the little Jesus.

Now the priest was a good man, but he was poor and his family was large. It may be assumed that he did not question the Divine provenance of the icon of the cellar, for in point of intellectual ability he was not greatly the superior of his parishioners. His cupidity equalled his credulity. He thought of the riches that an icon, fallen out of heaven, would bring to him, if he could but gain possession of it and set it up in his church. All the countryside would come to see the marvellous thing and to pray before it. The church would become a place of pilgrimage. And pilgrims would want him to stand before the icon

with a little censer in his hand and recite prayers. There would be molyebens for a number of people in common, and each would give him a little offering. And there would be individual molyebens which might bring in as much as a rouble. And a profit might be made on the sale of copies of the icon. Vassili might be sent to study in the University of Tomsk. And Tatiana might be given a marriage-portion, that would secure her a brilliant marriage with the son of a rich merchant. And so the worthy man began to elaborate plans for possessing himself of the icon.

He gained the powerful help of two peripatetic mission priests, who saw in the icon the lodestar that would bring the scattered inhabitants of the district together, and the instrument that would produce in them the proper dispositions to profit from the ministration of evangelists. So commercial enterprise and religious zeal combined to deprive Ivan and his fellow-villagers of their palladium.

The two earnest missionaries arrived in the village and preached the gospel to the inhabitants, who saw in their visit another sign of Divine favour. And when the preaching was done, the missionaries announced that the miraculous icon must be provided with a more worthy home than the village chapel, and that they were going to take it away and place it in the keeping of the priest of the distant church. The peasants, who had listened with such docility to the preaching,

showed their teeth, swore that they would defend their icon with their lives, and turned on the missionaries in so threatening a manner that the two zealots were forced to retreat.

When they had gone, the peasants held a meeting to decide what steps should be taken to avert the danger that menaced the village. It was decided to send Ivan to Tomsk, in order to place the matter before the Archbishop and to secure his protection. Tomsk was far away, the journey was costly, and there was little money in the village; but those poor souls made up the sum required in hoarded kopecks, and on the morrow Ivan started on his momentous journey.

At the palace of the Archbishop they told him that his High Holiness had gone away and would not return for some weeks. Nobody in the palace was entitled to decide the delicate question that Ivan propounded. The Archbishop alone could pronounce on the propriety of keeping an icon, alleged to be of supernatural provenance, in a village chapel. And as Ivan could not stay in Tomsk until the Archbishop's return, he was obliged to go home with no better news than that the matter would in due course be laid before his High Holiness.

I do not know what was the nature of the Archbishop of Tomsk's judgment. The rural tale came to me by chance from the other end of the Russian empire, and I was never able to learn how it ended. For aught I know Vassili may be

swaggering in an university town and Tatiana established in life with a rich merchant, on the proceeds of their father's prayers before the miraculous icon. But I cling to the hope that those humble souls, who thought that that picture of the Virgin and the little Jesus had dropped from heaven, have the consolation of keeping it in their rude chapel.

Here, then, is superstition, different in its nature, though possibly from a Christian point of view less harmful in its effect, than the superstition so deeply rooted among the English, that persons who have neither conformed to the moral code of Christianity nor observed the religious practices it enjoins are, at death, transformed into radiant angels.

The question naturally arises whether fervour in the superficial practices of religion among the Russian peasants is an indication of spirituality. "The prevailing opinion among foreigners," says a Russian writer, "is that the Russian peasants, though imbued with many superstitions, are nevertheless a very religious race." I do not myself feel justified in adding to this body of foreign opinion either in one sense or the other; for I venture to think it savours of impertinence for a foreigner to make a sort of ex cathedra statement about a question of so difficult a nature, when the Russians cannot agree about it among themselves. Let me quote a Russian on the point. "The most prominent of our historians, N. Kosto-

marov," wrote Stepniak in a passage which shows that political bias had not destroyed the instinct of a scholar, " who unites to his vast erudition an unrivalled historical insight, is of opinion that the modern orthodox peasants are at much the same standpoint as were their forefathers, the Muscovites of the seventeenth century, and they, according to Kostomarov, ' were remarkable for a state of such complete religious indifference as to be without a parallel in the annals of Christian nations.' Another historian, S. M. Soloviev of Moscow, draws from the same facts a different conclusion, extolling throughout his work the ' deep devotion ' of the Russians to their creed." A lengthy catena of passages from the writings of Russian scholars, whose learning is as great as their sincerity is undoubted, might be compiled to support the opinion of Kostomarov and the view opposed to it of Soloviev. When I attempt to balance these views and to appraise these opinions, two series of facts and episodes in my own experience come into my mind; the one might be adduced to support the conclusions of Kostomarov, and the other to support those of Soloviev.

It is a mistake to think that all Russian peasants have the childlike faith of the Siberian villagers, whose tale I have told. The priest of a village in the government of Moscow spoke to me sadly of the change he saw in his parishioners. Once the church was crowded, now the congregation is

sparse. And the former reverence for the holy icons is slowly dying. In the progress of a religious procession through the village, he had found some of the young people making game of the sacred images.

One summer morning I was in a little town on the festival of a miraculous icon, a great picture of Our Lady and the Divine Child. It was set on a wooden stand, furnished with poles, that rested on the shoulders of the four men who bore it, two on either side. The townspeople stood in single file all down the chief street, and as the image made its progress they ducked their heads and bent their backs, so that it might pass over them. As each received this odd benediction, he fell in behind the icon, so that those who were first in the procession when it started were pushed further and further back, until half the population of the town were between them and the icon. Some of the people were very serious, and some seemed to be amused at having to bend themselves to a right angle. I stood at the side of the broad street to watch the ceremony, and passed the time of day with a young dandy who happened to be standing next me, a lad of eighteen, whose name was Plato, in top-boots, black breeches, and a blouse of sky-blue sateen, tied in at the waist with a sky-blue cord that ended in tassels.

"But don't let me keep you," I said, after Plato and I had agreed that the weather was perfect and he had given me an account of the

miraculous discovery of the image. "It is time for you to get a place to pass under the icon."

"I'm not going," he said.

"Really?" I said, with a shade of interrogation in my voice.

"No," he answered; "I am not a believer."

"But you are Orthodox?" I asked.

"Of course," he answered; "I'm Russian."

"And you've come out for the procession."

"It's the custom," he said; and when I told him that I was going to follow the people out of the town and over the heath to the holy well, he said he would like to come with me.

Beyond the houses, we took a short cut in order to get to the well before the icon, and we lost sight of the procession. Under our feet was yielding turf. The blue sky was radiant. Before us stretched the green country. Butterflies hovered above the grass, darting hither and thither, butterflies with wings as blue as Plato's eyes, sulphur butterflies that flew up so high that the sunshine eclipsed their pale wings. Plato threw off his cap, like a yachting cap, tossed it into the air, and caught it. The wind ruffled his yellow hair, carefully combed down to his eyebrows.

"It's good to live," he said, and laughed. "You know," he went on, "as I said just now, I don't believe. Many, many things I don't believe," and never, I thought, as he turned and looked at me, twisting his cap in his hand, had a sceptic more candid eyes.

"And why I don't believe, I can't tell you," he continued; "so it happens"; and he asked if the English held the same views as the Orthodox about the Sacrament.

I told him that I thought it was difficult to believe that there was not a God.

"Of course God must be, and the Mother of God," he assented.

The holy well was a spring of water bubbling up in a little pool, over which there was a thatch roof supported on wooden posts. The bearers of the miraculous icon, the priests in yellow robes and cylindrical hats of purple velvet, went through the wicket in the palisade surrounding the pool, and as many people as could find standing-room within the enclosure followed them. The great picture, in a casing of glittering metal in which were apertures to display the blackened faces and hands of the Virgin and Christ, was taken from its stand by the priests and dipped into the pool to bless the waters anew. Was this some curious conjunction of Christian rites and rites that were performed in the Russian land before Vladimir, the saint, cast the image of Perun into the Dnieper and caused his subjects to be christened in the river? Plato did not know the significance of the ceremony. Nobody seemed to know.

"It is the custom," they said.

Numbers of people had brought bottles with them, and they filled them from the holy spring.

" Little father, I beg you to fill my bottle," said an old woman, passing an empty vodka-bottle to an old peasant within the palisade around the pool. And she drank a draught, useful for the body and of benefit to the soul, when he gave her back her bottle filled with the healing water.

Some of the men dipped their caps into the spring and drank. I saw one man give his dripping cap to an eager woman, and she drank from it. Those who could not get near the well drank the water that issued from it and trickled at the bottom of a muddy ditch.

" Very, very beneficial," said a thankful woman, wiping her lips with her apron.

Plato watched the scene with interest and did not permit himself the indulgence of even a flicker of a sceptical smile; but he was a spectator, nothing more, and I realized that he felt his intellectual position to be superior to that of a believer in the magical properties of ditch-water. He was unable to explain the mental process which had led him to reject the teaching of the Church. He had lost his faith—that was all there was to be said—and he may find it again and be as puzzled to account for its recovery as for its loss.

It is in the nature of things that Plato's vague unbelief should spread among the lower classes of Russia. The men and women who have the greatest influence on public opinion, the " godless intelligentzia " (to use the expression employed by the late Father John of Kronstadt in a letter

I received from him), the leaders in the struggle for Freedom and the limitation of the power of the Crown, are usually indifferent to the teaching of the Church. The enslavement of the Church by the State, and the union of the temporal and spiritual power in the person of the sovereign, have led some of them to regard a blow against Orthodoxy as also one against Autocracy, and the clergy show a disposition to take a similar view. Most of the *intelligentzia*, however, appear to think that the intellectual feebleness of the Church will loosen her hold on the masses, and the spread of education complete the process of disintegration which they have initiated. As it is, their indifference is not without its effect on the lower classes. The country people, who flock into the towns for work, remark the disregard of religious practices, the performance of which they have been accustomed to consider essential to salvation. Those who become factory-hands very commonly substitute belief in the doctrines of socialism for belief in those of Christianity. Servants find that it is not considered necessary to observe the fasts of the Church. An elderly cook may prepare agreeable dishes in Lent, the Great Fast, for the family she serves and, adhering to the pious habits of youth, subsist herself on bread and a soup made of potatoes and dried mushrooms. Younger servants are apt to follow the example of their superiors. And there are servant girls who go back to the villages to marry, workmen who return

to the plough. Out in the country I have talked with a peasant who had settled down to till the ground after working in a Petrograd factory for a number of years. He had embraced the extreme views of the Social Revolutionaries. With a persuasive tongue and the glamour of the town upon him, he could hardly fail to exercise a strong influence on the young men of his village. And, at a touch of doubt, down tumbles the glittering edifice of icons that has been erected on the dogmas of the Orthodox Church. And the clergy are ill-prepared to combat even superficial infidelity. They are prone to rely on the power of fear and sentiment to safeguard the treasure of the gospel. A tract, given me in exchange for an alms by a nun at the festival of the miraculous icon—she wore top-boots, a rusty black dress with a short skirt, and a black shawl over her head—was typical of the method employed to retain the allegiance of the masses. It gave a terrifying account of the appalling calamities that befell a bad girl who abandoned the practices of orthodox piety. Had I given it to the sceptical Plato, it would, I think, have confirmed him in unbelief. In point of fact I did not give it him; I gave him a rouble, which he gave me to understand would provide him and the beautiful Prascovia, whom I did not have the advantage of meeting, with all the fun of the fair that evening.

That unbelief will spread among the masses is, I think, inevitable. At the same time the need

of religion will turn the minds of the people to the teaching of the rivals of the clergy of the Dominating Church. *Borba s Katolikami, borba s Baptistami,* the struggle with the Catholics, the struggle with the Baptists, are terms to be found in the Orthodox press since the imperial ukase of April 1905 gave Russians the right to leave the Orthodox fold and deprived the clergy of the advantage of employing the police as the watch-dogs of their flocks. The Baptists, according to Mr. Byford, the continental organizer of the body, have made a quarter of a million converts in Russia during the last forty years. They possess 650 churches and, besides their adherents in Russia proper, have 28,000 believers in Siberia and 11,000 in the Caucasus. I went to one of their services in Petrograd, and realized the strength of their appeal to humble people. The translations of jingling American hymns they sang would possibly have repelled those who appreciate the sublime poetry of the anthems of the liturgy, but they comforted those poor souls. They hung on the words of the pastor. At the end of his discourse, when all were kneeling and he asked any sister or brother who accepted the Saviour to raise the right hand, an elderly woman near me burst into tears. The consciousness, not untouched with pride, of being a little flock of the Lord's elect, set in the midst of an erring city, transformed the bare room into a portal of heaven.

The appeal of Protestantism to the emotions

is stronger than that of Orthodoxy. In an Orthodox church I feel that the people have come together to worship the Almighty; in the room of the Baptists I felt they had come together to be consoled by Him. Protestancy, while weakening the Dominant Church, may retard the process of decay that has begun in Russia; but, if it is to be judged by its achievements in the land of its origin, where it has become a disintegrator of faith, it cannot permanently arrest the progress of unbelief. The influence of the Orthodox Church is waning, and the number of those who heed her voice is diminishing, and this process will continue. That an institution whose foundations are laid so deep in the holy Russian land should collapse, as some hold, when the power of the Russian sovereigns ceases, as it inevitably must, to be autocratic, is an idea that appears to me false. Orthodoxy spread her majestic mantle over the land centuries before a Muscovite prince blazoned the two-headed eagle on his shield, and equipped himself with the tools of state-craft that had grown rusty in Byzantium. The first step in the regeneration of the Orthodox Church will be her release from the proud and ignoble position in which the State has placed her. And out of the West, when we are lying under the turf, will come the light that will guide her into peace.

Let me fling aside the prophet's cloak, that ill becomes me, and tell a tale of the icons with

which this chapter began. I shall tell it as it was told to me by Anna Ivanovna.

"They say it was the prayers of St. Seraphim that gave us an heir to the throne," she said. "I do not know if that is true, nobody can know, but to-day I have heard a remarkable story of his power. It was told me by a friend who knows the people and whose word I can rely on. They had a child, a little boy of seven, whom they loved very much, and they let him have a pony so that he might learn to ride. Well, there was an accident: he fell off the pony and was badly injured. The doctors did all they could—the father got the very best doctors for the child—but the boy grew worse, and at last the doctors had to tell them that his life could not be saved. The mother was Orthodox, and she begged her husband, who was a Lutheran, to telegraph to Father John of Kronstadt and beg him to pray for the child, and to telegraph to the monastery, where the relics of St. Seraphim are kept, for an icon of the saint. And just to please her, her husband did as she asked. The child became gradually weaker, and two days later he fell into a deep sleep.

"'It is the last sleep before death,' said the doctor. 'When he wakes, it will be the end.'

"So his mother sat at the bedside and watched. But when he woke, he seemed better, and sat up in bed.

"'Mother,' he said, 'I've had such a funny dream. An old man with a long white beard

came into my room, and he knelt down by the bed and prayed a long time. And then he got up and put his hands on my head.'

"His mother sent for the doctor, who came and examined him.

"'I cannot understand it,' he said. 'Humanly speaking the child was bound to die. He is cured. He is going to live.'

"And that evening the icon of St. Seraphim came from the monastery, which is far away and beyond the railways. The child was sleeping again, and his mother put the icon at the foot of his cot, leaning against the rail.

"'Mother, mother,' he cried, when he woke up and saw it; 'that's the old man who came into the room.'"

A POLISH STUDENT LIBERATING THE WHITE EAGLE OF POLAND.

(From a post-card widely circulated in Poland at the time of the publication of the Imperial Manifesto of October, 1905.)

CHAPTER XII

On the way from Pskov to Vilna I talked to nobody. I lay on a wooden shelf in the dark, listening to the sleeping soldiers who were lying on the other shelves and on the seats of the rumbling railway-carriage. And when the dawn came and the soldiers got up, I was too sleepy to speak with them, and sat at a window, looking at the boundless plain over which we were passing and then at the low hills, with belts of larch and pine, of the pleasant valley of the Vilia. The soldiers were drinking tea and smoking parsimonious cigarettes, rolled in newspaper, when we arrived at Vilna and I left them.

I took a cab, a rickety victoria, and drove up the steep road that leads to the city from the railway-station in the outskirts. The day was young and men were on their way to work. At a turn of the road I caught sight of a high gateway, with a façade of glowing ochre, unpierced by windows, that towered above the dingy houses flanking it on either side. It was the Ostra Brama.

The cab went slowly up to the yellow gate on the brow of the hill. High on the ancient wall, that looked so new, I could see a shield, blazoned with the arms of Lithuania, a white knight on

a white charger. We creaked out of the sunshine into the coolness of the archway of the bar, and the coachman took off his hat. The men in the carts and carriages that crowded the narrow street beyond were all bareheaded, and I heard the sound of the thin voices of boys, singing a hymn, that seemed to come from above the vaulting of the gateway. And as we came into the sunshine again, I looked round and saw, through the open window of the chamber of the bar, a silver picture of the Virgin Mary, before which quivered the pale flames of candles. To the right and the left of the window shone the golden letters of an inscription, *Ad Te confugimus, Mater Misericordiae,* and the anthem that the choristers were singing was *Salve Regina.* Their voices caressed the last words of the prayer, *O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria,* that floated above the creaking of carts and the panting of motors. On the pavement at either side of the street people were kneeling. Some of them were reading prayers from books. Some had rosaries in their hands and were gazing at the silver picture. Some were praying with closed eyes. And none of them seemed to notice the passers-by or to be disturbed by the traffic. All down the street, almost as far as the church of St. Theresa, a hundred yards from the Ostra Brama, there were people at their prayers, men and women, rich and poor.

The cab rattled along, past the gateways of two monasteries, painted with the oriental figures

of Orthodox saints, as if the monks desired to advertise the bewildered traveller that he had not been translated on some magic carpet out of Russia into Spain.

At the hotel they gave me a room with a window giving on the Theatre Square, the heart of the city. At the other side of the square was a magnificent Italian church, on the top of which had been perched a number of onion-shaped domes and Russian crosses, which looked almost as ridiculous in such a situation as they would if they were put on the roof of Westminster Abbey.

I had not been in the room three minutes before a young Jew, of fleshy habit of body and dark complexion, entered with an enormous pile of fur-lined overcoats in his arms. His eyes were lustrous and his full lips almost scarlet.

"The Herr has arrived in Vilna at a most favourable moment," he said, speaking in German with great rapidity.

"What do you want?" I asked in Russian.

"Your High Nobility has arrived in Vilna at a most favourable moment," he repeated, speaking in Russian with equal rapidity. "There is a great, an unprecedented, a marvellous opportunity! A merchant of the city has just sold his entire stock of furs for almost nothing, and I have come to show you a selection of overcoats, magnificent, luxurious overcoats, which I am almost giving away," and he put his pile of furs down on the floor."

It was a hot September day, and the sight of the furs made me feel hotter.

"I don't want an overcoat," I said; "please go away."

He did not budge. He continued to talk with great rapidity and singular effrontery, and spread out one of the overcoats, a hideous garment, made by a slop-tailor in his sloppiest way.

"It is useless to talk," I said.

That was a view which he refused to accept.

"For sixty roubles, Barin, you can have this superb coat," he said. "If you had come an hour later there wouldn't have been one left. Everybody in the hotel is buying them. They realize that there will never be such a chance again."

"Get out this instant," I said in a tone that might have led him to assume that disobedience would be followed by murder.

He picked up the pile of furs and stood his ground, continuing to praise his wares. So I took him by the shoulders and pushed him gently out of the room. He retired with lamblike docility, and we bade each other a cordial good-morning. Ten minutes later I found him in the street outside the hotel, and he besought me to look at a selection of fur boas. As I fled from him, I heard him remark that any one of them might suitably be worn by a countess.

I walked at random along a street, appropriately named German Street, for it is inhabited by Jews, who speak debased German, corrupted

with Polish words, the tongue which the Poles call jargon—pronounced yargon—and we call Yiddish. And after a little I turned back and went past the Orthodox monasteries and the little church of St. Theresa to the shrine of our Lady of the Gateway, a fantastic way that seemed to begin in Whitechapel, pass through Moscow, and end in Rome. I began to wonder how the inhabitants got on together. A lady, who looked like an Englishwoman with a tendency to district-visiting, threw some light on the situation. She sat at a little stall, strewn with rosaries and prayer-books and pious pictures, in the hall from which a staircase leads to the chapel in the Ostra Brama. I stood to look at her wares, after I had been to salute the Lady of the silver picture.

"How much is this?" I asked, speaking in Russian and picking up a little engraving of that sweet Matka Boska Ostrobramska, of the Mother of God of the Gateway.

She answered in Polish.

"Piench kopake," she said, which means five kopecks.

"Pyat kopake," I said, which was the same thing in Russian.

"Piench kopake," she repeated firmly, as if I had been trying to beat down the price.

"I'll have six of them," I said.

She looked at me icily and shot out a sentence in Polish, which I did not understand, but I took the opportunity of airing one of my few Polish phrases.

"Does the Pani speak Russian?" I asked.

"Doesn't the Pan speak Polish?" she answered.

That feminine evasion pleased me, and convinced me that she could speak Russian if she wished.

"Now look here," I said; "I am a foreigner, an Englishman. I can speak Russian and I can't speak Polish."

Like ice in the caress of the sun, her obstinate expression melted into an amiable smile, and she prattled agreeably in fluent Russian.

And I loved her for her obstinacy. She was a soldier in the Polish army, defending the greatest fortress of nationality, which the Russian Government, inspired by a false idea of imperial unity and egged on by Prussia, has besieged for long years. But if I went to Vilna now and found the lady at her little stall, it would not be necessary to hold a bilingual palaver; for the war has made Poles and Russians brothers.

Half a century ago, when Muraviev made the streets of Vilna red with the blood of Poles who had made their last and most disastrous bid for freedom, the tension between Poles and Russians, between Poles and Jews, who, caring nothing for either side in a dispute of Christians have a natural tendency to side with the top dog, was far greater than it was when I was in Vilna, as a tale told me by an old Polish lady shows.

"My grandmother used to live in Vilna," she said, "and when she took a cab, she used always to say to the driver that before starting they would make the sign of the cross for Divine pro-

tection on the way. Now if the driver made the cross from right to left, she knew he was a Russian; so she did not take his cab. If he didn't make the sign of the cross at all, she knew he was a Jew; so she didn't take his cab. But if the man crossed himself from left to right, she knew he was a Catholic, and got into the cab."

But from the lady of the rosary stall I learnt that, in the presence of the benign Mother of the Gateway, differences of language and of race and of creed are forgotten. The shrine is Polish and therefore Roman, but Russians venerate the silver picture, and even the Jews conform to an universal custom and uncover as they pass through the bar in respect to the faith of others. I was not surprised. The silver picture has a power that I do not understand and cannot analyse. The famed Madonna of the Dresden Gallery is the only picture that has made me tremble; but, as Nijinski said of a London church, it does not make one want to pray. And yet it is perhaps the most beautiful of all pictures. An artist would say that the picture of the Ostra Brama is worthless. Its guardians think so little of its merits that they have placed it in a silver encasement, so that only the face and the hands of the Virgin are visible. And the face and hands are olive, almost black. Twice every day the windows of the chamber in the bar are flung open and the street is transformed into the nave of a cathedral. All day long there are people at their prayers, and the flagstones of the pavements are

worn with the knees of pilgrims. And the fame of the picture is in all the churches. Copies of it are set up in English churches or in German churches. I have seen impressions of it printed in Germany, in the country of the traditional enemies of Poland, with a title in many languages. What is the secret of the empire of the Matka Boska Ostrobramska over the hearts of Christians? Is it that each bedesman, when he looks up at Her, sees in the setting of silver and jewels the picture of the Virgin that he made in his heart, when he learnt to say Ave Maria at his mother's knee?

Years ago the Russians took a picture of Christ, which was beloved by the people of Vilna, from a Latin church and placed it in an Orthodox church.

"The next thing they will do is to take away the Virgin of the Gateway," said a Polish lady to a cabman, who was driving her through the streets of Vilna.

"No, ma'am," he said; "that they will never do."

"Why are you so sure?" she asked.

"Our Lord allowed men to crucify him," replied the man, "but he never allowed them to touch his Mother."

And in the poetry of that answer lurked hatred created by persecution. How deep was that hatred I had occasion to discover for myself that afternoon, when I climbed from the pleasant Botanical Gardens, where children were playing,

to the top of the Castle Mount, in order to enjoy a view of the city and the valley of the Vilia, and to see the ruins of the stronghold built by Ghedimin, Prince of Lithuania, conqueror of Volhynia and Tchernigov, who reigned in 1320. An old Pole, a man of the people, was good enough to point out the principal buildings.

"That belonged to the Dominicans," he said, pointing to a church that rose above the roofs of the houses across the gardens, "but they turned them out. That was when I was a boy. And there is the Russian cathedral of St. Nicholas," he continued, waving his hand in the direction of the Italian church with onion-shaped domes in the Theatre Square; "it belonged to us once and the Jesuits served it," and his voice was charged with regret.

"Look at that building with a green roof on the hill to the left," he cried; "it used to be a convent of the Bernardines. And who live in it now?"

He paused and looked at me.

"Russian nuns," he said, and had they been murderesses the inflection he gave to the words could not have been more bitter. "And look down there," he went on, "you can see a statue in front of the Governor's palace. That is the statue of Muraviev, the butcher of '63. Do you know that they called the hangman's rope Muraviev's necktie? And do you know why they have put up that statue in front of the Governor's palace?"

I shook my head.

"I will tell you," he said. "They put it there in order to remind the Governor of the way in which he should treat the Poles."

A year later I met a Polish engineer, an urbane man of the world, in England, and told him of this conversation.

"We Poles subscribed to the fund for the erection of that statue," he said. "We were determined that there should be a lasting memorial of Muraviev in Vilna, so that we and our children and their children may never forget the despotism of Russia."

Is it wise to recall these tags of conversation now, when Russians and Poles are fighting in amity against a common foe? The joy that cometh in the morning springs from the womb of the night. In the recollection of past wrongs the putting aside of enmity and the unity of friendship become more glorious. The sad memories I have recalled show the justice of the promises made by Russia to Poland, and the righteousness of the determination displayed by the Russian people that they shall be fulfilled. And as England is not guiltless in the crime that a hundred years ago perpetuated the partition of Poland, they may serve to determine the British people to further the designs and to uphold the hands of the Russian nation.

On the way back from the Castle Hill to the centre of the city I went into the cathedral. It is a Greek temple and was probably considered

beautiful in the first decade of the last century, when it was built. It has a portico of great Doric pillars, supporting a tympanum with statuary representing Noah offering a sacrifice. St. Helena, St. Stanislav, and St. Kasimir balance themselves dangerously on the slanting roof. And the pillars and the statues look as if they were carved out of suet. Within is a dim chapel, lit by silver lamps, which burn before the silver shrine in which lies the body of St. Kasimir.

The cathedral is built on the site of a temple, in which the Lithuanians worshipped Perkounas, the god of light, until they abandoned paganism and embraced Christianity in 1386, when their Prince, Jagellon, married the heiress of the Polish throne and united in his person Lithuania and Poland. Some of the greatest Polish families are of Lithuanian origin. Their ancestors adopted the language and the customs of the polished race with which a royal marriage had united them, and, at the present day, it would be absurd to call a Sapieha or a Radziwill a Lithuanian. The common people of Lithuania have conserved and continue to speak the Lithuanian tongue. It is not a Slavonic language. It is akin to Lettish, which is spoken in the country dominated by Riga, and to Prussian, which died out in the seventeenth century. Philologists state that it retains Indo-European features that have been lost by other languages centuries ago. The word *esti*, meaning *it is*, for instance, according to Professor Meillet of the Collège de France, is an

older form even than the *asti* of Sanscrit. This interesting language was only used by peasants until comparatively lately; and when the Russian Government prohibited the printing of books in Lithuanian, after the Polish rebellion of 1863, it seemed as if it might share the fate of ancient Prussian. The Lithuanians, however, cling to the belief that the curse which the builders of the Tower of Babel brought on mankind was in reality a blessing, and continue to endeavour to conserve their language. In country churches there are occasionally bloody encounters between Lithuanian peasants and Polish peasants, who are unable to agree whether the hymn-singing shall be in Lithuanian or in Polish. A church for Poles and Lithuanians was opened in London, but the ecclesiastical authorities soon found it necessary, in the interests of peace and charity, to provide a separate chapel for the Lithuanians. The embargo on Lithuanian was removed by the Russian Government in 1905, and books and newspapers are now printed in the language; indeed an acquaintance of mine, Professor Dombrovski, left an important post in the Imperial Catholic Academy of Petrograd in order to become editor of a Lithuanian newspaper. This clergyman is, I believe, well known in Esperanto circles, for his translations of the psalms in Esperanto verse.

"I have spent so much of my life in learning languages," he said to me, "that I came to the conclusion that some universal language was necessary."

His enthusiasm, however, did not impel him to persuade me to learn Esperanto. That task was undertaken—I hasten to say unsuccessfully—by an elderly clerk of the Petrograd telegraph-office, who presented me with a grammar. He was greatly concerned when the *Daily News* discontinued its practice of printing a daily paragraph in Esperanto.

Education has swept Lithuanians into the ranks of the bourgeoisie of Vilna and other towns, where, as in Wales, they tend to adopt the language of the gentry, in spite of the protests of men of letters among them and politicians dreaming of a Letto-Lithuanian state under the suzerainty of Russia. The reviving national consciousness of the Lithuanians is shown by the resolutions passed by the Lithuanian Congress, held in Chicago in October 1914, in one of which is embodied a demand for the establishment of an autonomous Lithuania after the war. But I am inclined to think that the friction, which may be occasionally noticed, between Poles and Lithuanians arises in the main from class-feeling. The landowners, the professional classes, the business men, are as a rule Polish or polonized; it is easy to understand that the efforts of the Lithuanian lower classes to establish equality may be unconsciously masked by a show of nationalist ambition.

While I was writing the foregoing the German troops were marching into Vilna. They dese-

crate the streets of the city and defile the silver Vilia, which flows through the meadows surrounding the Lithuanian capital. But they are a unifying force. History will repeat itself. Poles and Lithuanians were once enemies. Early in the thirteenth century the Poles espoused the cause of the Teutonic Knights, who fought against the pagans of Lithuania in order to make them accept their Christian *kultur*. But after the union of Poland and Lithuania, the knights showed that their desire to give the Lithuanians the benefits of German *kultur* was based on a determination to place them under German domination. Poles and Lithuanians fought side by side against the Teutonic Knights and annihilated their armies on the battlefield of Grünewald in 1410. And it is again the arrogance of German *kultur* and the ambition it no longer masks that is uniting Poles and Lithuanians. Who can care in this dark hour whether a citizen is a Pole or a Lithuanian or a Russian? They are brothers in the face of a common foe. And I think of them now as children of one family, kneeling in the street that is a cathedral, praying to the sweet Mother who is the Mirror of Justice as well as the Comforter of the Afflicted.

CHAPTER XIII

I GOT into a third-class carriage of the morning train from Vilna to Varshava. It was divided into several uncomfortable compartments with wooden seats and low wooden backs. In my compartment there was a lanky girl, who looked about fourteen, and a dishevelled soldier. I took them to be brother and sister. The girl had sandy hair and a sallow face. She was munching a thick piece of ham laid on a thick piece of bread, an occupation which she occasionally remitted in order to talk with great rapidity to the soldier, who laughed and chattered back. He put a cushion for her to lean against, and she immediately gave herself the airs of an invalid who doubts whether her nerves will support the discomforts of a long journey. Her attitude to the soldier suddenly changed.

"Shut the window," she snapped in the most imperious manner.

The soldier, who had come to my end of the compartment and was fumbling in a bag, paid no attention to her.

"This moment!" cried the young lady, with unsisterly violence. "Vassili, do you hear? this moment!"

Vassili flew to the window in a bound and put it up.

"My smelling salts," ordered the young lady, and he found them and offered them to her humbly. She did not deign to thank him. Then the train started, and Vassili came and sat opposite me. He began to make a cigarette by rolling a few shreds of tobacco in a bit of newspaper, and so of course I gave him one of mine, and we began to talk.

"And where are you going?" I asked.

"Well, I am not going anywhere," he said. "I am just taking the Barishna, the young lady, to her school in Bielostok. She's the Colonel's daughter and I'm the Colonel's servant. And when I've got her safe into that school I'm going back to Dvinsk where we come from."

Life in the army, he told me, might be worse, and, as his master was good and his master's cook generous, it was really not a bad thing to be an officer's servant. The pay was poor, sixty kopecks a month, one-and-threepence then, about ninepence now, not enough to provide a British soldier with a packet of Woodbines a day.

"Vassili," said the Barishna severely; "come here."

He got up obediently and took the place in the corner opposite her. They chattered and laughed, talking softly for ten minutes in the most intimate manner. Then the young lady lay back in her seat with an air of exhaustion.

I asked her if she would like to look at an illustrated newspaper. She checked my advances with the utmost haughtiness, and gave me a look that made it clear that she considered it an impertinence that a person of my condition should have dared to speak to a colonel's daughter.

At the first station at which the train stopped several people got into our compartment, including a short, stout Jew, with an oily face. As soon as the train started again the conductor came in to look at tickets.

"Your ticket is not valid," he said, after he had examined mine; "you must get out at the next station and pay a fine of thirty kopecks and buy another ticket."

"But why isn't it valid?" I asked.

"You broke the journey between Petrograd and Varshava at Vilna, and you neglected to get the station-master to stamp your ticket."

"Does it really matter?" I asked.

"Does it really matter!" repeated the Jew with the oily face. "There's a question to ask! Don't you know the rules of the railway?"

I took no notice of him and looked at the conductor.

"You've got to pay the fine," he said, "and you've got to get a new ticket. There's no help for it."

"I should think not," said the Jew.

"And God be with you," said an old peasant-woman.

And so, at the next stopping-place, the conductor came and bundled me out to go and be punished by the station-master.

"Thirty kopecks," said that official. I gave him the money and he wrote out a receipt. "And now," he said, "you must go and get another ticket."

That I was determined not to do. Russians were able to reduce the fiercest tchinovniks to submission by a process of persistent whining, why should not I? At any rate I would try.

"Please to be amiable," I began in a voice that shook with pathos and servility. "That is so much money for me to pay"—the sum demanded was, if my memory serves me, about eight shillings—"what am I to do if I have to pay so much money over again?"

"There's not the slightest use in arguing about the matter," said the station-master curtly; "you've got to get another ticket."

"But please hear me; I am a foreigner, I know nothing. Four roubles! a colossal sum! I implore you to be amiable."

"You're only wasting your time," said the station-master, and I heard the second bell ring to warn passengers that the train would soon be going.

"How can I afford to pay four roubles?" I asked the station-master, who looked at me stonily. "I didn't know that I had to get my ticket stamped at Vilna; how should a foreigner

know? All I ask you to do is to let me go on with the ticket I have already paid for. From my heart, and with the greatest humility, I ask you to be gracious."

"Very well," said the station-master with great cordiality, and, although he did not move an eyelash, his manner was so charming that it was difficult to believe that he was the gruff person who had been sitting at the desk when I entered the office. He wrote out an order to the man at the ticket-office, requesting that I should be provided with a new ticket free of charge. I overpowered him with thanks, was upbraided by the booking clerk for coming for a ticket just as the train was going to leave, and joined the lanky girl, the soldier, the Jew with the oily face, and my other companions just as the third bell announced that the train was going to start.

The Jew was engaged in eating a raw herring and an onion, which he held in his hands. He suspended this agreeable occupation when I entered the carriage, and asked me if I really didn't know that I ought to have had my ticket stamped at Vilna. I satisfied his curiosity, and he then addressed the entire carriage on the subject.

"Here," he said, waving the herring, "is a man who didn't know he'd got to have his ticket stamped if he broke his journey."

Everybody stopped talking and looked at me.

"I put it to you," said the Jew, with another eloquent wave of the herring, "how can anybody understand a man travelling about and not knowing a little thing like that?" Then he subsided, bit a large piece out of the herring, put a curly piece of onion in his mouth, and, thus deprived of the power of addressing an extensive audience, turned to me with a string of questions.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"I am an Englishman," I said.

"And where do you live?"

"Petrograd," I answered, with impious thoughts of gratitude to Heaven in my heart that he was not allowed to live there too.

"And how do you get your living?"

"The good God gives," I said.

"Well, of course we all know that," he said. "It's all very well to say 'the good God gives'; but that's not an answer to the question."

I smiled at him.

"You must have some definite source of income," he said, "and that's what I'm trying to get at."

In that attempt, however, he failed, and finally lapsed into silence and the remainder of the herring.

"Glory to God and the devil take him," said the old peasant-woman, when he left the carriage.

"Not sympathetic," said a benevolent-looking elderly man with a grey beard, who sat next the old woman on the seat opposite me.

"Not sympathetic!" she repeated, aghast at the benevolent man's mildness, "disgusting, according to me."

"Hebrew," I said.

"Yes, Hebrew," said the old woman. "What people!"

"They're not all like that," said the benevolent man, looking at me.

"There's good and there's bad," said the old woman, "mostly bad," and she sighed.

"I know they're not all like that," I said, disregarding the old woman, who appeared to be dropping off to sleep. "I know a young Hebrew in Petrograd, who is a very decent fellow, very good-looking, too, and quite certain that he doesn't look like a Hebrew. I always feel so sorry for him, because of course he does; they always do. But I wouldn't spoil the poor boy's happiness by telling him for anything in the world."

"Poor thing!" muttered the old woman, opening her eyes and shutting them again.

At the next stop of the leisurely express, the soldier bought an apple tart for the colonel's daughter, which she took with the air of a princess receiving a nosegay from a mayoress, and he got out and filled his kettle and the old woman's kettle from a gigantic samovar on the platform. And I, being still without a kettle, drank a glass of tea and ate bread and sausage in the third-class refreshment-room.

The old woman got out at Bielostok as well as the soldier, who shook hands with me at parting, and the lanky girl who was a colonel's daughter. The town is a pleasant place, set in meadows and orchards, more Polish than Russian and more Jewish than Polish. I had visited it some years before, when a large number of innocent Jews were massacred to expiate the sins of a small number of bad Jews. The revolutionary ardour of the bad Jews had led them to form a habit of shooting policemen. The murdered policemen's wives and children cried their eyes out, and, when a suitable opportunity occurred, policemen avenged their comrades with the help of some soldiers and the hooligantzi of the town. The wicked Jews were clever persons and knew how to keep out of harm's way, leaving the good Jews to suffer. The respectable Christian inhabitants, so the Jews told me, took no part in the massacre, and they praised them for succouring those who came to them for protection.

"We and the Christians live here like brothers," said the President of the Jewish Relief Committee.

"The Jews and we live here like brothers," said the curé.

In his church I thought I was in France. It was the octave of the Fête Dieu, and little girls in white dresses were strewing flowers before the Host, borne in procession round the church by the curé, who walked beneath a canopy.

An elderly woman, with a bundle and a basket,

joined me and the benevolent man, just as the train was about to start.

"And are you going far?" I asked her.

"To Varshava," she said.

It appeared that she was going to see her daughter, who had left an excellent place in the household of a countess to marry a grocer, whereby she had acquired a magnificent fur cloak and several splendid dresses, the property of a former wife of the grocer's, besides an admirable husband.

"Are you Russian or Polish?" I asked the elderly woman.

"Catholic," she replied.

"And you are Russian, are you not?" I said, turning to the benevolent man.

"No, I am Hebrew," he answered.

And when he said that, remembering the remarks I had made about a Jewish acquaintance in Petrograd, I felt so embarrassed that I wished I could disappear beneath the floor of the carriage.

"Didn't you realize that I was Hebrew?" asked the benevolent man.

"No, I certainly did not," I answered.

He beamed at me. The colour came into the patch of face between his beard and his eyes. His manner became so cordial, he talked at such length, that I was glad when he got out. Poor man!

And when he had gone, I dozed the rest of the way to Varshava.

CHAPTER XIV

"VARSHAVA," said a railway porter in a long blouse, poking his head in at the door of the railway-carriage.

Had he recognized that I was an Englishman, he would possibly have said Warsaw; for, being a Pole, he was the soul of courtesy and had exquisite manners. But possibly he had never heard that hideous name, which the Germans, who call the Polish capital Warschau, have taught us. Let us forget the ugly thing and give the city the beautiful name used by Poles and Russians alike. The Poles spell it like this—Warszawa. They use Latin letters, as we do, but their system of spelling is different. And our system is as puzzling to them as theirs is to us. Being sensible people, they spell foreign names phonetically. Shakespeare becomes Szekspir and Victoria becomes Wiktorja. Let us adopt the same plan and write the beautiful name of a beautiful city in our own way. Then Warszawa becomes Varshava—put the stress on the second syllable, which rhymes with the Persian Shah, and you will pronounce the word as well as any Pole or Russian. And if you have any love for the music of words you will eschew

JAN AND WANDA'S HOME TO-DAY.

in the future the name derived from the language of our enemies. At the least, I beg leave to pay this little courtesy to our Allies.

The polite porter found the portmanteaux, which I had sent in advance from Petrograd, where I had made up my mind to abandon the artificiality of a simple life in a Russian blouse as soon as I arrived in Varshava.

" In Europe again," I said to myself, as I drove away from the station in a cab, like a Paris fiacre, with a driver on the box in a dark blue livery, ornamented with shining buttons, which might in its youth have been worn by a London coachman.

The creature who had driven me to the station in Petrograd was in a long robe, like a dressing-gown, and a flaming girdle. He belonged to the East, to a people whose culture came to them, together with their religion, from Constantinople, when Constantinople was a Christian city. The Polish cabman belonged to the West, to a nation whose civilization and religion had their source in Rome and whose capital was stirred by the mighty intellectual movements which have moulded the character of the peoples of the West. When the citizens of Moscow were convinced that the path to hell was strewn with Latin grammars, and held that a journey to foreign parts was a sin against the Holy Ghost, the people of Varshava were sending their sons to study at the Italian universities,

whence the glory of the Renaissance came to the Polish capital and made its scholars fastidious writers of Latin. The Reformation found no echo in Moscow. In Varshava the new German doctrines of religion were accepted almost as readily as in England. The ability of the clergy prevented their permanent adoption, but there was a time when it seemed as if the city would become a centre of Protestantism. Exposed to the same influences that have been deployed on us, the Poles are more closely related to us than the Russians. The Slav nature, fined in the sieve of Latin civilization, has a charm to which it is impossible not to be sensible.

I love the domes and golden crosses of the cities of Russia; but I have been bred in the West, and, when I am in Russia, there always comes a time when I hanker for Western sights and Western sounds. I sat behind the coachman of the Polish cab, staring at the silver buttons on the tails of his coat as symbols of the West, and the sight of the rosy towers of the great Gothic church of St. Florian made my heart beat quicker. A woman passing the church, crossed herself, making the sign from left to right, as our St. Thomas or Henry VIII might have done, as they do in France and Italy, as they do in England, when they cross themselves at all. *Enfin*, I was in Europe again.

In the Krakovsky the lamps were lit and there were carriages and slim, upright Poles,

with the brisk air of Englishmen, and women who walk more beautifully than any women in Europe. I thought of dreamy music, which Liszt called Soirées de Varsovie, and wondered how I should pass the evening. Vladislav decided the question for me. I met him in the hall of the Hôtel Bristol, where one meets most people, and he decided that I was to go to his club, a place, he said, frequented by people interested in politics. I resigned myself to the idea of spending the evening in a leather armchair, engaged in serious conversation with serious persons, and accepted his invitation. And when Vladislav had gone away, promising to come for me at nine, I talked to a quietly-dressed Jew with an agreeable manner, who was drinking a whisky and soda and had been kind enough to pass the time of day. He claimed to be of British descent, and fumbled to discover who and what I was. I told him frankly that I wrote for newspapers, and he immediately offered me particulars of an important scheme to drain the Pripet marshes, which he said anybody with such talent, as it was evident that I possessed, could fashion into an entrancing article. I showed no enthusiasm for the draining of the Pripet marshes, and he began to talk about a fascinating creature of his acquaintance, who adored Englishmen, indeed I was the particular type of Englishman she adored above all others. It happened, oddly enough, to be the very hour at which she

was accustomed to drink chocolate in the adjoining café. But in view of the unparalleled charms she appeared to possess, prudence, if nothing else, forbade me to concur in the gentleman's amiable suggestion that it might be agreeable to drink a bock in her company.

Vladislav arrived half an hour late, and when we got to his club he said that, as I was an Englishman and therefore devoted to sport, we had better look at the gymnasts. Thereupon he led me to a hall in which some sixty members of his club were performing the most amazing feats. Few of them were young; but they bore their years easily, and their slim figures were displayed in white vests and tights. Their bodies seemed to have the elasticity of practised acrobats, and when they ended a complicated gymnastic figure by standing on one another's shoulders, I felt certain that a capable music-hall manager would have offered the entire troupe an engagement on the spot. As most of them were middle-class persons, and also nobles, they would certainly have declined the most brilliant offer. Almost all the well-mannered men one meets in Poland are nobles, and they find it difficult to understand how it is that an English acquaintance, whose education and manners are not inferior to their own, should be no more than a commoner. There are, however, nobles and nobles; as a great lady put it: "We distinguish between the nobility and the aristocracy."

The Pole may not play cricket and may regard football as an innovation; but he loves to exercise his body, and is as keen a sportsman as an Englishman. Men of the town, as I saw in Vladislav's club, practise the daring feats of gymnastics which are encouraged by the athletic clubs of Bohemian provenance, called Sokols or Falcons. In the country men ride and shoot for pleasure and from necessity. What Polish gentleman thinks twice before riding twenty miles to dine with a neighbour?

In the billiard-room of the club, provided with French tables, Vladislav presented me to a wiry little man with a jerky manner and an auburn beard, telling him that I was an Englishman and interested in the Polish question.

"Enchanté," said the little man; "you will be so charming as to have supper with me."

I thanked him suitably and declined the invitation on the ground that I had just dined.

"But what difference does that make?" he asked.

"You really can't refuse," said Vladislav in English.

"I'll just go and collect a few friends to join us," said the little man brightly, and ran away without giving me an opportunity of protesting again.

A minute later a waiter came to me with a message. Did I desire to drink dry wines or sweet wines? Thanking Heaven for its mercy, I gave

the only answer an Englishman would give, and presently the little man came to fetch us.

There were two other guests, elderly men of a build that made me certain that they did not take part in the violent exercises of the upper storey.

"Now what would you like?" said the host, handing me a complicated bill-of-fare. "You have only to say," he added superbly.

"Give me nothing but Polish dishes," I said, pluming myself on the beautiful spirit in which I was entering the path of self-sacrifice.

"Un cognac, n'est-ce pas?" said the little man, filling our glasses, and he gave us a toast.

"The Holy Father!" he cried.

"The Holy Father!" said the others solemnly, raising their glasses. And as that excellent brandy slipped down my throat, I wondered whether the saintly Pius would not have preferred us to drink his health in water; for the old injunction, *bibamus papaliter*, is now no better than a dismal counsel of asceticism.

"No more for me," I said, as the host began to fill our glasses again.

"Comment?" he cried. "But surely you are not going to refuse to drink to the health of the King of England?"

And loyalty compelled me to empty another little glass.

"And now," said the host very solemnly, busily filling the glasses once more, "I ask you to drink to the Autonomy of Poland."

And for nothing in the world would I have refused to drink that toast.

The four Poles ate beefsteaks, but a waiter put before me a dish of exceedingly rich and complicated food, balls of mincemeat and vegetables floating in a spiced sauce. The host assured me that this was a typical Polish dish, and gave me a generous helping. My heart sank.

"Now this," he said, taking up a bottle of claret, "is a French wine, which I think you will appreciate," and he filled my glass.

I was struggling with that complicated Polish dish, and when the others were engaged by Vladislav, who was telling a good tale, I managed to put a considerable part of the contents of my plate back on the dish. An instant later I saw that hospitable little man look anxiously at me.

"But you have nothing," he said, and put all that mess of mincemeat and sauce, which I had so happily discarded, back on my plate.

There is a well-known practice in academies for young ladies of dropping surreptitious morsels of bread-and-butter pudding and other disagreeable foods into useful table-napkins. To that base device I was forced to resort.

The others contented themselves with one dish; but it was considered proper that I, as the guest of honour, should have two. I thought of St. Sebastian in the play shouting encore, encore, when the archers paused in their task of shooting arrows at him, and realized my

imperfection as I continued to deceive. Tokay was handed round, a favourite wine in Poland, and usually bad. Experts say that little good tokay is made now, and tell tales of great flagons that are kept in the cellars of great houses and only broached at a christening or a wedding.

The cognac and the French wine and the tokay being finished, Vladislav remarked to me in English, which the others did not understand, that it was up to us to invite them to drink a bottle of champagne. I nodded and he ordered the wine. *It was sweet*, and as I drank to the health of those nice, elderly professional men, who had, all of them, spent youthful days in prison to expiate harmless acts of patriotic fervour —they smiled happily as they spoke of prison, like men who tell one what young devils they were when they were young—I realized that the sacrifices to politeness, religion, loyalty and freedom, which I had already made, were complete.

It was nearly one o'clock in the morning when I left the club, after talking with a number of agreeable men. There were protests, but I insisted on going home, was followed to the door by a crowd of clubmen, and got into a cab. Several persons, whom I did not recognize, also got into the cab, and two men stood on the steps, clinging on as best they could. Away we went, whirled through several streets, and stopped at a house which was not my hotel. Behind was a line of cabs, all crammed with clubmen.

"Come along," said Vladislav, dashing up from nowhere, "we are all going in here. You simply must come."

"In for a penny, in for a pound," I said to myself, and followed him into the house.

It was a restaurant. We were shown to an enormous private room, with a long table on which were dishes of caviare and other snacks. Waiters brought in a small barrel of beer and bottles of champagne.

My host had disappeared, and I found that we were being entertained, some fifty of us, by a portly Count, badly dressed in a grey suit and artificial cuffs.

"Musicians!" he cried. "We must have musicians," and the waiters hurried into the room an attenuated fiddler and a weary-looking pianist. They began to play a vigorous mazurka.

Off flew the Count, dancing down the room with an elderly man, who had the air of a professor at an university. And in a twinkling all those fifty serious men were running about the room in the breathless, hurrying, rushing measure that they say nobody who has not Slav blood in his veins can dance.

"Champagne!" cried somebody and filled my glass. In the whirl and helter-skelter round me I discreetly tipped most of the wine upon the floor.

The musicians played a languid waltz, which I danced with one of the waiters.

Pop went the champagne corks.

"But what is this?" said the host, floating up to me with a bottle; "it is terrible, it is horrifying, your glass is almost empty," and he filled it up.

My conscience still pricks me when I think of that second glass of excellent wine which was spilt upon the floor.

The Count, who had got so hot in dancing mazurkas and waltzes that he had taken off his coat, went and stood at the head of the long table and raised his hand for silence. In an instant the hubbub ceased, and the revellers became as silent and as serious as if they had been in a church. The Count began to speak. He spoke with sufficient deliberation to allow me to follow his speech. His theme was the sufferings of Poland, the duty incumbent on every Pole to work for her deliverance, and the glory of her future. He spoke with great simplicity and his speech was short, but its effect was profound. The listeners hung on his words, and, when he had done, they shook his hand and went away silently.

The champagne, the music, the dancing, had been an excuse for a meeting in which expression could be given to aspirations and convictions which could not be proclaimed from the platform or in the press. And in the necessity of that subterfuge to cheat the police, I caught a glimpse of the tragedy of Poland.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that those patriots did not enjoy the revelry that masked a political gathering. The rapidity with which Poles can pass from one mood to another is one of their distinguishing characteristics. In our own country we are inclined to dub one man serious and another gay, and to be surprised if they do not consistently maintain the character we have attributed to them. The Poles are not to be labelled in this way, and I think that one of the secrets of the charm of the Polish women and of the profound influence they exercise on the life of the nation is their ability to be intensely serious and intensely gay.

One day I was taken to call at a Polish country house. The hostess was a beautiful woman, and spoke both French and English perfectly. She talked about her children, about the infants' school she had established in the village, about English politics. There were new books from France and England on the tables in her drawing-room. Her knowledge, her earnestness and the restfulness of her manner impressed me.

"It was a love-match, you know," said the friend who had taken me to the house, as we drove away. "Her people did not like her marrying the Count, because their family is much older than his, and with her beauty and charm, and fortune too, she might have made a much better marriage. However, she showed great determination, and she is still in love with

her husband, although they have been married at least a dozen years and have five children."

A few days later I met that beautiful and tranquil woman in Varshava. She was supping with her husband and another man in one of the fashionable restaurants, and she looked very smart and very young in an exceedingly simple black dress and a hat with a garland of roses set at a jaunty angle. A Polish friend and I joined the party. The Countess was animated; she laughed and said witty things and was almost frivolous. She made us all gay.

"We are going to have a thoroughly good time this evening," said her husband. "You'd better all of you come over to the Hôtel d'Europe with us."

And to the Hôtel d'Europe we went, and champagne and peaches were brought to a large private room with a polished floor. Musicians came, a pianist, a violoncellist, an old fiddler. They began to play a mazurka, and the Countess tripped down the room with one of her guests, who clicked his heels together in the mad rush of the dance. Then she waltzed with her husband, and as they danced, the old fiddler followed them round the room. He made the measure of the dance quick and, perhaps it was when he saw the dancers looking into each other's eyes, his playing became languorous. And those two danced together like a boy and a girl who have just fallen in love.

Now did the Countess really care for champagne and dancing in a *cabinet particulier?* or was she a consummate actress determined to please her husband? I do not know. But I do know that no women in the world are as skilful in keeping an empire over the fickle hearts of the men they love as the Polish women. People marvel that the Poles, parcelled out among three emperors, remain a united nation. To know the Polish women is to cease to marvel at this phenomenon. The secret of the unity of Poland is the charm of the Polish women. When the men are downcast and inclined to give up hope, it is they who inspire them and refuse to contemplate the final defeat of their aims. It is they who instil the passion for the Polish cause, which animates them, into the souls of their children. An old Polish lady, very gentle, very simple, made me understand in a flash how intense that passion is. I was talking about her son, who lived abroad with his wife, a Frenchwoman who had been unable to master the Polish language.

"Have they any children?" I asked.

"Thank God, no," said the old lady. And there was such intensity of feeling in her voice that I realized that the thought of her son having children who would be brought up in a foreign atmosphere and with foreign ideas was unbearable to her.

The day after the supper with Vladislav, I lunched at an hotel with Roman Dmowski, the

leader of the National Democratic Party, which advocates a policy of sober, but not extravagant, reform. He directed the policy of the Polish group in the Imperial Duma for a time, and only gave up his work in Petrograd, where he had displayed consummate political talent, when he found that he could further the Polish cause more effectively by activities in the kingdom of Poland itself. His book, *La Question Polonaise*, to which the late M. Leroy Beaulieu contributed a valuable introduction, should be read by anybody who desires to understand the Polish problem.

"Have some eau-de-Cologne," he said, when we were washing our hands before going into the restaurant. "I always use Atkinson's," he added.

"Do you?" I said, without thinking. "I always get Jean Maria Farina's."

"I never use it," he said curtly.

It was the politician and the patriot speaking, and not the man of the world who had the air of a well-set-up Englishman.

There was one of those little indications, which I have often had cause to remark in Poland, of the detestation in which the Poles held the Germans. The measure of that hatred is the unity that now exists between the Poles and the Russians; for it would be idle to deny that the relations between the two races were good before the war. I have no inclination to recall the past errors of the Russian Tsars in their treat-

ment of the Polish nation; it is sufficient to say that a parallel may easily be established between the methods adopted by the Russians to crush the Polish people and those adopted by the English to crush the Irish nation. It may be added that the employment of those methods in the past is regretted by Russians now as much as it is by Englishmen. And perhaps the regret of the Russians is more bitter than ours, because they have only just recognized the folly of their policy and we began to change our policy years ago. Thus the attitude of the Poles to the Russians has been similar to that of the Irish to the English. One important difference in the situation must, however, be borne in mind: in Poland the landed gentry are in sympathy with the aspirations of the middle classes and the peasantry, whereas in Ireland this is not as a rule the case.

"Remember, you are only allowed to talk Russian because you are a foreigner," said my hostess to me one day in a Polish country house, when the vicar, who could talk Russian and could not talk French, happened to be at luncheon.

"The Poles are charming people and most highly cultivated," said the Russian general who commanded the Citadel of Varshava to me, "but as they can't talk Russian and we can't talk Polish, we see nothing of one another."

His explanation of the position was more ingenious than correct, for the difference of language

is not a bar to intercourse between people who speak French as well as they do their native languages. But the general's remark, together with that of the Polish lady, suffice to show that the relations of the Poles and Russians before the war were, to say the least, strained. Conceive of this hostility intensified a thousand degrees and you will have some faint conception of the hatred that the Poles have for the Germans. "As long as the sun is the sun," says a Polish proverb, "a Pole will never love a German."

I took as the text of these reflections a trifling remark made by a great politician. And I do not think I was wrong; for it is often the unconsidered trivialities of conversation that show with greater clarity a man's inmost thoughts than do his formal statements. Let me quote a woman in the same sense. She was a great lady and her husband had an estate in Prussian Poland.

"My dear, what do you think happened the other day?" I heard her say to a lady with whom I was staying in Russian Poland. "I was walking in the park, when a whole brake-load of Germans drove in and they stopped me to ask if they could go over the château. Of course they couldn't speak Polish, and—would you believe it?—not one of them could speak French. Naturally I was not going to talk German with them, so they had to go off without an answer."

Petty? Certainly not. The mistress of the

château was no more petty in her refusal to talk German with Germans than a daughter would be were she to refuse to talk with the members of a family who had insulted and persecuted her mother.

On the ancient town hall of Poznan—we have been taught by our enemies to call the town Posen, but I refuse to defile the pages of this book again by using that German name for a Polish city—there was set the heraldic sign of Poland, an eagle, carved in stone. Came a day when German workmen were sent to hack at the eagle with their tools, in order to give it the form of the imperial eagle of Germany. The mutilated eagle stands as a symbol of the policy of Prussia in her Polish possessions. In spite of definite promises made by Prussia at the Congress of Vienna, in 1815, to respect the nationality of the Poles, to assure to them the maintenance of their language, to give to Poles the preference in filling public appointments in the Polish territories of Prussia, the creation of the German empire was followed by a policy designed to transform the Poles into Germans At first this policy was carried out within the limits, although against the spirit, of existing laws. In 1885 more vigorous measures were adopted. Thirty thousand Poles, who were not subjects of Prussia, were driven from their homes, where many of them had lived since childhood, and sent across the frontier. This measure was intended by

Bismarck to be a blow against the spiritual unity of the Polish nation; but the brutality with which it was carried out moved even the Reichstag to indignation, and its members passed a resolution condemning the expulsion "as unjust and detrimental to the interests of the empire." The resolution of the Reichstag had no effect.

"We can do nothing here," said Prince Radziwill, leader of the Polish party in the Reichstag, to me in 1912. "It is the Prussian Landtag which controls Polish affairs," he added.

And in 1886 it was the Prussian Landtag that empowered the Government to expend an enormous sum in buying Polish lands in order to settle German peasants on them. Nearly a thousand million marks have been spent for this purpose. In Poznan one may see a magnificent building in which the German officials employed in wresting Polish lands from Polish owners are housed. A Frenchman once gave the Poles a sound piece of advice; "enrichez vous," he said. Across the Atlantic Poles were making money and they sent it home to be used in defeating the German land-grabbers. And the Poles at home, admirably organized, began to buy the lands of German proprietors in Poznania and they bought out the Germans a little faster than the Germans bought out them, until the Government realized that it was throwing money into a bottomless hole, and, in 1896, reserved to itself the right of acquiring

land that German colonists desired to sell. Still the colonization scheme cost more than it was worth; so in 1907 the Landtag obeyed its Prussian masters and passed a law forbidding the erection of buildings without official authorization. In practice Germans always received authorization to build and it was constantly denied to Poles. The stubborn Polish peasants defeated the law by living in wagons like gipsies or burrowing in the earth. In 1912 a Pole bought a windmill and the field in which it stood, and sought permission to build a house for himself, his wife, and their eleven children. Permission was refused. Now the Pole, who had been putting by money for years, while working in a town, in order to settle in the country with his family, was determined not to be defeated by the German authorities. He made a dug-out, in which he housed himself and his wife and his eleven children. For aught I know, they may be still living there. Thwarted at every step by the Poles, the Prussian Government, determined to stick at nothing, carried a bill through the Landtag in 1908 providing for the forcible expropriation of Polish estates.

"The principle of that measure is too dangerous," said Herr von Gottberg, a typical Prussian junker and a noted contributor to the *Lokalanzeiger*, to me early in 1912. "It provides the socialists with an excellent argument for the expropriation of Prussian estates on

economic grounds. The law has never been carried into effect and it never will be carried into effect."

And Herr von Gottberg was wrong. In October 1912 four Polish landowners were informed that their estates were to be purchased by the Royal Commission. Useless to protest, useless to argue. There was no other course but to obey and to take the sum at which the commissioners were pleased to set the value of the land.

Is it surprising that the Poles hate the nation that is slowly crushing them out of existence? Did I not say, at the beginning of this book, that I might have to take you out of Russia into Prussia, in order to explain why one of the most brilliant men in all Poland refused to put one single drop of German eau-de-Cologne on his pocket-handkerchief? And who, in such circumstances, will accuse the mistress of the Polish château of pettiness if she cannot make Polish lips frame the German words of the assassins of her people? Perhaps, hoping against hope, she and her husband were among the Polish nobles who went to a reception given by the Kaiser the last time he was in Poznan. Was it surprising that the shopkeepers and the business-men and the workmen of the town stood in the streets and hissed at the nobles, as their carriages passed on the way to the castle? That they misjudged the nobles is certain, but their instinct was sure. They knew that William II was the arch-enemy

of Poland and that no show of friendliness would mollify him. And did he not make a speech in Poznan that day, and, ignoring the Polish nation, express the hope that Poznan might ever be a centre of German *kultur?*

I have dealt with one aspect of German policy in Poland. A word about the attack on the language of the Poles. That beautiful and vigorous tongue has been attacked in Russia, but the Russians had at least the excuse, a bad and wretched excuse, I am aware, that the Poles had twice risen in rebellion. The Germans, on the other hand, had not even the shadow of a miserable excuse when, in 1887, they forbade secular subjects to be taught in the elementary schools in the tongue the children spoke in their homes. German had already been substituted for Polish in secondary schools. In 1887 the peasant children were forced to do their lessons in a language which is as different from their own as English is from Russian. In 1905 another decree forbade the children to learn the Bible and the catechism in Polish and to say their little prayers in Polish. And the children refused to pray in German. To them the language they had learnt at their mothers' knees was the language of the angels. They were kept in after school, poor mites, and they refused to obey. They were flogged. But there could be but one end of an unequal struggle between the might of Prussia and little children: there were tears and at last

submission. But I have heard of country schools where the Herr Inspector rarely comes, and where Polish children have Polish lessons.

"And now, dear children," says the teacher, when the Prussian official does arrive, "sing one of your beautiful songs for the Herr Inspector to hear."

And all those little hypocrites—bless their sweet souls—rise up and sing: "*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.*"

You laugh. So did I, when a Polish friend told me the tale. And yet it is a tale to make one cry.

When the war broke out and the Germans were pretending to be the true friends of the Poles, the see of Gnesen, whose archbishop once had Varshava in his diocese, was filled up after being vacant for many years. Why was it vacant? Because the Pope and the King of Prussia could never agree in the choice of an archbishop. The Kaiser required a German archbishop, who would further his anti-Polish policy. The Popes refused to sanction the appointment of a German to shepherd Poles. And the war forced the Kaiser to yield to Benedict XV that which had been denied Pius X and Leo XIII. They have placed a Pole in the see of Gnesen. They have played Polish airs as they entered Varshava. They have brought into that city the throne in which the Saxon kings of Poland sat. They might have spared their pains. The Poles

are disinclined to weigh in the balance the promises of Kaiser and of Tsar. Their choice of allegiance has been determined by considerations of another order. They have greater confidence in the Russian people than they have in the German people. It is the Russian, and not the German, who appreciates Nietzsche's saying: "the State is the coldest of monsters." The Poles prefer to trust themselves to those whose violence springs from the spirit of rebellion, rather than to those whose ferocity is the outcome of docility. "Vous possédez la Cité du présent," wrote one of the most spiritual of rebellious Russians, addressing the law-abiding peoples of the West; "nous sommes les chercheurs de la Cité de l'avenir." It is the confidence of the Poles that this Russian enterprise will be successful that has governed the decision of the majority of them to throw in their lot with the Russian people.

"If nothing else comes of this great historical upheaval," says Professor Paul Vinogradov, writing of the war, "but the reconciliation of the Russians and their noble kinsmen the Poles, the sacrifices which this crisis demands would not be too great a price to pay for the result." On both sides there are the clearest indications that the reconciliation between the Poles and the Russians, between the greatest Slav race that is Latin and the greatest Slav race that is Greek, has already been accomplished and that their

amity will be lasting. A century ago it was Napoleon, on the way to Moscow, who augmented the enmity of the Poles and the Russians, and his ill-chosen agent to induce the Poles to range themselves wholeheartedly beneath his standard was a predecessor of Cardinal Mercier on the archiepiscopal throne of Malines. It is now an emperor, whose troops are devastating the Russian land, that makes the Poles and Russians brothers, and from his now glorious throne the great Archbishop of Malines gives his benediction on their holy compact. The proclamation of the Grand Duke to the Poles was sincere, and its ratification by the Premier in the name of the Tsar has made it the pledge of the Government and the throne. But more important even than these high promises, if I read the signs of the times correctly, is the promise of the Imperial Duma to Poland. The temper of the Duma before the war was, as I have indicated in an earlier chapter, on the whole conservative. The nation was disposed to look at its proceedings with suspicion and to regard its members as confederates of ministers responsible to the crown alone. An overwhelming majority of its members have signified their determination that Poland shall have Home Rule. That term is better than the one used in our newspapers, autonomy; for it expresses an idea in language which should make the least keen-witted of us reflect. And it must be borne in mind that Poland has racial problems

as thorny as those of Ireland; indeed, an exact British parallel to the action of the Russian Duma will be observed when Mr. Bonar Law rises in his place in the House of Commons and in the name of his party declares that he will never be satisfied until the autonomy of Ireland has been effected.

And the Poles deserve happiness, because they have been the forerunners of Freedom in her progress through the world. Was it not the Poles who welcomed the Jews to their land, when we were persecuting them and hounding them from our island? Was it not Catholic Poland who gave to the conquered people of Livonia the right to practise the Lutheran religion without let or hindrance, in an age when the idea of religious toleration had hardly been conceived in England? Was it not Poland who made German, the tongue of the traditional enemies of the Poles, the official language of her possessions in the Baltic provinces? Was it not a Polish queen who expressed to a British ambassador her horror at the religious persecution conducted by Queen Elizabeth? Even the fall of Poland may be adduced as evidence of Polish love of Freedom. The autocratic power of the Muscovite Tsars made Russia mighty, while the limitations placed by the Poles on the power of their sovereigns enfeebled the Polish Republic and led to its downfall. They showed me in the great library of the Blue Palace in Varshava two symbols

of the glory of Poland. One was a Turkish banner. It was taken from the Turks by the Poles, when King Jan Sobieski defeated them beneath the walls of Vienna in 1683 and delivered Austria from enslavement and Europe from imminent peril. The other treasure in Count Maurice Zamoiski's famous library was a little silver-salver. On it were engraved these words: "To Tadeus Kosciuszko from the Inhabitants of Bristol." And as I looked at it I remembered that the Polish soldier fought against us in the American war of Independence. He had fought for his native land and lost; but his passion for freedom could not be stilled. We cannot think of him as a man who was our enemy; rather we revere his memory because he withstood us when we made ourselves the foes of Freedom.

"The Germans give us excellent roads," said a Polish lady from the Duchy of Poznan to me; "they have made our country as neat as a counting-house and our lives as methodical. But give me the wild forests of Russian Poland, the bad roads, the disorderliness, the muddle, and let me be free."

If ever I am deprived of all sources of income, I shall beg the money for the journey to Poland and go there to end my days happily in other people's country houses. There is a special Polish word to denote a person who subsists in this manner.

"I met Pani X, and she asked me if she

could come here for a fortnight," I heard a Polish lady say to her husband.

"Rather a bore," said the husband.

"I know," said his wife, "but of course I couldn't refuse her, because she hasn't a kopeck, and Countess Y, where she is now, is going away, and Pani Z, where she's going later, won't be home for a fortnight."

"Of course you couldn't refuse her," said the husband, who, being a Pole, could not conceive of a person who would be brutal enough to refuse hospitality to a decayed gentlewoman who demanded it.

And even if one is not impoverished, as I discovered for myself, one may, if one wishes, pass from one Polish country house to another week after week; for wherever one stays neighbours and visitors beg one to find time to come to them. And of all the Polish houses in which I have stayed I love the home of Jan and Wanda the most. I drove to it one September morning over thirty miles of the worst road in Europe, bounding about on the seat of a motor like the usual pea on a drum. The chauffeur chose to go at a great pace and terrified the countryside with raucous blasts on an aggressive horn. Peasants got out of their carts and covered the heads of their horses with their coats as we jumped past, and so did the drivers of great wagons, primitive omnibuses with roofs and sides of sailcloth stretched on a wooden frame, containing innumer-

able Jews in long black coats, married Jewesses with wigs, unmarried Jewesses without wigs. In the market-place of a little town inhabited by Jews I left the car and got into a phaeton which Jan had sent, because the road on the other side of the town was considered too bad for motoring. It was, in point of fact, a billowy tract of sand, and Jan, as I told him afterwards, should have sent a camel instead of a carriage.

"Don't blame us for the bad roads," he said. "We pay the taxes to keep them up all right. Perhaps one of these days we shall get Home Rule; and you may be certain that, when we are allowed to manage our own affairs, we shall have roads like billiard-tables."

Jan was waiting on the doorstep of his house to welcome me. He is not yet forty, a tall man with broad shoulders, a short brown beard, and candid blue eyes. As I got out of the carriage to go to him, I felt something moist and warm settle on my hand and, looking down, saw that a footman was kissing it.

"I hate that," said Jan, who had noticed my surprise at the kiss; "but they will do it."

And I was not surprised that he disliked the custom; for I noticed that, when he went into the village, children came running from every direction to seize his hand with their dirty little paws and kiss it.

Jan's wife, Wanda, was in the hall. She is a good deal younger than he is and comes of a

Galician family. She is one of those women who just escape being beautiful, but the sweetness of her expression makes her face very attractive. Her voice is soft and her manner restful. I cannot imagine her talking scandal or using slang. She does her thick black hair in a simple way and she dresses simply; but she has the art, which all Polish women seem to possess, of always looking trim. A Polka, that is to say a Polish woman, almost always walks beautifully—there is, indeed, a certain allure in her walk which is extraordinarily attractive—and Wanda, whether she is going across a room or walking through the village, always looks exceedingly graceful. Jan is a lucky man. Those two have been married some years and are still in love with each other. Wanda, as somebody remarked to me, might have done better for herself; she was born into the world a countess and belongs to the aristocracy, while her husband only belongs to the nobility, to the *toute petite noblesse,* he told me with exaggerated humility.

And Wanda welcomed me to her home and took me to the drawing-room to be presented to her mother-in-law, Pani Censki, *née* Countess Wloszczowicz (quite easy to pronounce when you know how), as she states on her visiting-cards according to Polish custom. And I lost my heart to Pani Censki, first, because she was a real old lady who did not attempt to conceal the fact that she was seventy, and secondly, because she was utterly

charming. She greeted me in English, a tongue which she spoke almost perfectly, although, as I afterwards discovered, she had never been in England. She was very little and wore a perfectly plain stuff dress, which belonged to no particular period. Her brown hair, a little faded, was parted in the middle and fastened in plaits at the back of her head. She had beautiful hands and brown eyes, as innocent and as beautiful as the eyes of a girl. I have never seen her lean back in her chair, and there was great dignity and also vivacity in her manner. She had had the advantage of being young at a period when, even in England, girls were taught good manners, expected to obey their parents and wore book-muslin and ribbons.

The day after my arrival I discovered part of the secret of Pani Censki's charm. There was a little festival at the house to mark the opening of the school, which Jan built and finances, for the autumn term. They called the school, the only one in the village, an *asile des enfants*. It is the oddest school I have ever heard of.

"We are so thankful that now the Government allows us to have these infants' schools in the Kingdom," said Wanda; "but of course it's a pity that we are not allowed to teach the children to read and write."

"Not allowed to teach them reading and writing!" I exclaimed.

"No," said Wanda; "if the inspector were to

find a reading-book or a copy-book, the school would be shut at once. And we are not allowed to receive children who are over seven."

"But why?" I asked.

"Because the authorities know perfectly well that we should teach them to read and write Polish. In some villages the squires let the teachers break the law, take children up to fourteen, and teach them properly; but we think it best to obey, and of course we hope for better times. And at any rate it is not as bad here as in Germany, for although all the Government schools are Russian, some private Polish schools are tolerated, whereas in the Duchy all the schools are German and no Polish schools of any sort are allowed."

The better times for which Wanda hoped have come. There is reason to believe that before the war Russia feared to offend Germany by abandoning her unsuccessful policy of trying to force the Poles to speak Russian instead of Polish. I have often been told that Germany informed Russia that she would consider the substitution of Polish for Russian, as the official language of the kingdom of Poland, in the light of an unfriendly act. I have never been able to obtain absolute proof of the truth of this statement; but it may be observed that it is in the nature of things that it would have been disagreeable to the Prussian Government to see concessions made to the Poles of Russia, which would have made them more

contented under Russian than under Prussian rule. The Poles, who knew that there was no likelihood of a change in the inexorable policy of Prussia, realize that the war between Russia and Germany has destroyed their most powerful enemies in Petrograd.

On the morning of the opening of the school in which reading and writing were forbidden, the little hall of Jan's house became a chapel. The doors of the great cupboard were thrown open and the altar within, on which were set candles and a crucifix, was displayed. The infants from the school knelt before it with their teacher, Jan, Wanda, Pani Censki and the servants. A priest in a white chasuble entered and the Mass began. Jan's mother knelt at a chair. She had a Polish prayer-book and her lips moved as she read the prayers to herself. After a little, she put the book down and knelt upright with her eyes closed. As she prayed her face seemed to change and to become young. And in her devotion I found the secret of her tranquil charm.

In Poland one is for ever being reminded of the faith of the Polish nation. Along the country roads are crosses and statues of the saints. The peasant or the gentleman, whom one meets by the way, greets one with the words: "May Jesus Christ be praised." And to this greeting must be given the reply: "For ever and ever." Both in the towns and the villages the churches are crowded at service-time. I like to go into a Polish church

half an hour before Mass or Vespers begin, in order to listen to the people singing hymns. There may be a dozen or twenty people sitting in the pews, and somebody starts a hymn. A girl pitches the tune too high, or perhaps the others do not know it, and the singing collapses forlornly, like a candle going out. Then an old man with a quavering voice begins the first line of a well-known hymn, the others take it up and, although the voices are a little harsh, they sing with the heartiness of Wesleyans at a prayer-meeting. These popular hymns are usually very long, but everybody seems to know them by heart. The clanging of a bell at the door of the sacristy is a signal that the amateur service in the nave must end, in order that the official service in the chancel may begin. And as soon as the clergy and choir have discharged their office, the Polish hymn-singing begins again. I know of nothing more impressive than to hear a Polish congregation sing "Holy God, Holy, Almighty," at the end of the Sunday morning service. The thin Gregorian music of the Mass has been sung, and the priest kneels before the altar to sing the first verse of the hymn that every Pole seems to know by heart. Then the organ crashes out the majestic melody and the congregation sings the second verse with a fervour and intensity of feeling that is profoundly touching. In Varshava good people say sadly that few go to church. Their standard must be high; for I have never been able

to find an empty seat in one of the churches on a Sunday morning and have invariably been obliged to stand. The Poles like a good sermon, and, although the town churches are often so crowded on Sunday mornings that people are obliged to stand in the aisles, packed together so closely that it becomes an impossibility for one more person to be squeezed into the church, a preacher will take out his watch, after speaking for three-quarters of an hour, look at it and calmly continue.

Jan and Wanda took me to their parish church one Sunday morning. We went in a carriage and four, not from pride, but because two horses could not drag the brougham over the abominable road, a river of mud. The carriage swayed and lurched. Jan cheered his mother, who was evidently nervous, although she said nothing, by assuring her that the carriage very rarely fell over.

"Thank God," she said when, by a miracle, we arrived at the little stone church safely. Some peasants were putting perfectly clean goloshes over their muddy boots before entering.

"They consider it very grand to have goloshes," said Jan, "because townspeople wear them, so they always take care not to soil them."

We sat in a squire's pew in the chancel of the church, which, like many Polish churches, had windows on only one side of the nave. In spite of heavy rain and mud, the church was crowded

JAN AND WANDA'S PARISH CHURCH TO-DAY.

with peasants, who sang vernacular hymns during the Mass to the accompaniment of an organ in the west gallery which, like most organs in Polish country churches, was out of tune; indeed, I do not think it could have been tuned for a century. The discords that came from it made me shiver, but, such is habit, nobody else seemed in the least incommoded. At the elevation of the Host a dozen men and women knelt in the aisle with flaming torches in their hands.

It is patriotism, as well as faith, that sustains the religious fervour of the Polish people. No Church has a juster claim to call itself a National Church than the Polish. It has been a refuge to the afflicted in the darkest hours of Poland's tragic history. The clergy have been a powerful force to keep alive the spirit of the nation during a century and a half of unparalleled misfortune, and the Pope has been the only sovereign who has dared to raise his voice in defence of the Polish people, since Europe sanctioned the parcelling out of Poland to Russia, Austria and Prussia a century ago. In Russia the words Orthodox and Russian are interchangeable, and in Poland the word Catholic is a synonym for Polish. The persecution of Catholicism in the Russian empire was not due to dislike of the dogmas of Rome so much as to the desire of the Government to limit the influence of the Poles. Jan's mother would sometimes tell us tales of those bad days that have gone for ever,

when we were in Wanda's little drawing-room after dinner. She spoke very quickly in French, and as she told of the sufferings of Poland her voice sometimes trembled and her eyes shone.

"I used to think," she began one night, "that the martyrs were different from us, until I got to know some; then I discovered that they had the same faults as other people, although their faith sustained them in the midst of persecution."

"But how could you know martyrs?" I asked.

"I will tell you," she said. "The last persecution in Poland began in 1872. The Government had determined to stamp out the Uniats, who, as no doubt you know, are Catholics permitted by Rome to use the Eastern liturgy and to have a married clergy. Most of the Uniats in the east of the kingdom of Poland were Little Russians, but as they were Catholics they considered themselves Poles. The Government thought it would be an easy matter to induce them to become Orthodox, as the Uniat services are almost the same as the Russian services, and that peasants would not care whether they were under the jurisdiction of the Holy See or of the Holy Synod. It was part of the policy of russification. I was brought up in a part of Poland where almost all the peasants were Uniats and, as there was no church in the village, my father built a church of the Uniat rite instead of a church of the Latin rite to which we ourselves belonged. On Sunday mornings we used to go the Liturgy,

but the priest communicated us with Hosts consecrated by a Latin priest, who visited the church occasionally to say the Mass of our rite. One February morning soldiers arrived in the village, and the officer commanding them told the peasants that the Tsar wished them to become Orthodox. An old man, speaking in the name of the villagers, replied that they were the most loyal subjects of the Tsar, but that they must refuse to abandon the religion which their fathers and grandfathers had professed before them. Nothing that the officer could say would alter their decision, and an Orthodox priest who harangued them had no greater success. Then the soldiers resorted to force. Not to my dying day shall I forget the shrieks of those unhappy people as they were being flogged. Some were made to carry blocks of ice up and down the road, hour after hour, until they dropped from cold and exhaustion. But no torture would make them deny their faith. Finally, a number of men were arrested and sent to Lublin to be imprisoned and the rest were registered as Orthodox. Then began the great religious strike. The priest of the church had been turned out and an Orthodox priest installed in his place; but the peasants refused to go to church. Many of them were unable to obtain the sacraments for years. For instance, the nurse Wanda has for her baby, a most pious woman, was unable to make her Easter communion for eight years, until at last

she managed to do so unnoticed by the police in a crush of pilgrims at Chenstochowa. The Latin clergy could not help these poor people, because if it was discovered that they had administered the sacrament to nominal members of the Orthodox Church they were exiled to Siberia. My sister devoted her life to helping the Uniats. She had tracts printed, giving directions for baptizing children and for preparing the sick for death, and she used a good old Jew as her agent to distribute them. For nearly thirty-five years the peasants of the east of the kingdom baptized their own children, buried their dead, and the young people either went into Galicia to be married by a priest or had their unions blessed by the village elder. Sometimes, however, Jesuits came from Galicia, disguised as pedlars, said Mass in the forests, administered the sacraments, and blessed marriages. I was once at a Mass said by one of these brave priests. He was dressed in a peasant's frock and, instead of the usual vestments, he had round his neck a tiny stole of narrow ribbon. Pius IX had sets of very small altar vessels, which could be easily hidden at the bottom of a pack of combs and laces, made for these priests. They asked him to send relics of the early martyrs to encourage the peasants. He did so, but when the request was made he said: 'Why should I send relics to Poland? you have only to take up handfuls of the earth, it is drenched with the blood of martyrs.'

"The work of these disguised priests was very dangerous and many of them were arrested and imprisoned. There was one who went to my sister for advice, and after he had been in the country some months the suspicions of the police were roused; they discovered that he spent a great deal of his time in prayer, examined his pedlar's pack, discovered his chalice and sent him to the Citadel in Varshava. They knew that he had often been at my sister's house, so they went to her and accused her of helping him. She refused to admit that she knew him and then the police hit on a plan for making her guilt clear. The police-inspector took a photograph of the Jesuit out of his pocket and showed it to her little boy, a child of twelve, who had often seen the priest and did not know that he was not a genuine pedlar.

"'Now, my little man,' said the inspector; 'you have often seen this man talking to your mother, haven't you?'

"You can imagine how frightened my sister was, for she was certain that the child would recognize the photograph and that she would be packed off to Siberia without further ado. The boy looked at the picture a moment and then he said: 'No, I don't remember ever having seen that man.' It was really like a miracle.

"Some months later my sister came to me and asked me to lend her two hundred roubles. She was very poor, because her husband's estates

had been confiscated after the rebellion of '63. She wanted the money in order to bribe an official in the Citadel to arrange the Jesuit's escape. I gave her the money and then forgot all about the matter. A few weeks afterwards I was going to Kraków and travelled in the same railway-carriage as a priest and a peasant. The priest and I talked about the persecution, and, when we had crossed the frontier, the peasant suddenly said: 'I am a priest. I have been imprisoned in the Citadel of Varshava for the last six months. I find that somebody has bribed an official to let me escape and I have not the slightest idea who my benefactor is. I wish I knew, because I want to thank him.' Now wasn't that an extraordinary coincidence?"

"And did you tell him?" asked somebody.

"I didn't think it worth while," said Pani Censki.

It was almost a relief when she ended her tales; for the little old lady, usually so quiet and so restful, spoke with such fire and emotion that she brought tears to my certain knowledge into at least one pair of unaccustomed eyes that night.

And why repeat these tales of oppression now? Because they show the fine stuff of which the Polish peasantry is made and because they show the glory of the sovereign who gave his subjects religious liberty in 1905. At Konstantinov, a village in the east of Poland, I saw for myself the happiness that that splendid reform had

given. When the good news came, the whole countryside went mad with joy. For thirty-five years they had been debarred from practising their religion and had been perpetually told that it was their duty to believe as the Tsar believed and to pray as he prayed. They were so bewildered at the change made by the imperial manifesto that it was at first difficult to persuade them that the Tsar had not become a Catholic. In those days they put up a wooden church, like a great barn with an earthen floor. The women in those parts weave tartan-stuff for their petticoats and they had hung the sanctuary of that rude chapel and the pulpit with this cloth. The place seemed to me more beautiful than a high cathedral.

Near the wooden chapel, workmen were building a church of red brick and stone in the beautiful Vistula-Gothic style. The squire had given the ground and the material, and the labourers were giving their time. The deep foundations had been dug, they told me, in a single day; for three thousand persons had flocked to the place with picks and spades to do the work. While some dug, the others stood by and sang hymns. It was a time of holy junketing in the east of the Kingdom. The Bishop of Lublin passed through the countryside in triumph, accompanied by hundreds of Polish gentlemen and peasants on horseback. Never has there been such a day in Janov, the neighbouring town, as the day of the

prelate's visit. Those who could not get into the church sang hymns and listened to sermons in the open air. Even the Jews rejoiced with their Christian brethren, for they had sympathized with them in the days of persecution. Exiled Uniats, who had returned from Siberia when they heard of the Tsar's great reform, sat with gentlemen at a luncheon given in honour of the Bishop.

"When we had ended speechmaking," said a Polish acquaintance, a typical man-of-the-world, "an old peasant came and stood before the Bishop and asked leave to speak. He told us of the sufferings he and his companions had endured, and spoke of the joy they had felt in being allowed to suffer for Christ. And I can assure you that there was not one of us who had not tears in his eyes when that old man had ended."

The Uniat church had been destroyed in the kingdom; hence these peasants were obliged to join the Latin rite. They did not mind; they had suffered for principles and not for ceremonies.

Jan had not been a martyr; in point of fact, according to his own account, he had been a harum-scarum sort of a fellow until, as he told me, he was converted by a sister-of-charity who nursed him during an illness.

"And if there is one thing I believe in," he said, "although I am no saint, it is Christianity."

In Poland a country gentleman's fortune is

usually in his fields and forests. Jan had studied farming and forestry scientifically. He showed me a field of baby pine-trees, planted out like cabbages. They were to be transferred to places in the forest when trees had been cut down.

"We shall cut down these trees in forty years' time," he would say; "that little fellow over there will not be ready for market for another sixty years."

And in these days I often wonder what has happened to Jan and Wanda and their little son; for their pleasant home was in a country-side that has been swept by the war. They were not rich, and they are possibly penniless now. And for Wanda I am more sorry than even for Jan, because she came of a Galician family and her brothers must be forced to serve in the Austrian army. And both she and Jan had cousins who were subjects of Prussia. The Poles are forced to engage in a fratricidal war. Their country is devastated and their moral sufferings are more profound than those of any other belligerent people. But through suffering they are passing to freedom and future happiness. It is the will of the Tsar and of the Russian people that the Polish nation shall conserve its identity and that reparation shall be made to it for the sufferings of the past. That Poland may be united again is the prayer of every Pole.

One Easter eve in Petrograd I went to the Polish church of St. Catharine for the midnight

service the Poles call the Resurrection. It was my custom to go to St. Isaac's cathedral on that night with Anna Ivanovna and her family. But that year I was not in the mood to be a spectator of a magnificent and inspiring ceremony which I could only partly understand. I had a longing for the Latin prayers of the West, and so I went to worship with the Poles. St. Catharine's is a magnificent church, built in the form of a cross, and there is a great central dome. I elbowed my way through a crowd of people, who filled the spacious vestry because there was no room for them in the church, pushed open a door and went into the sanctuary where a couple of hundred men were standing between the chancel rail and the steps of the altar. The vast space beneath the dome and in the transepts was crowded with people packed closely together. Beyond, in the nave, there was a double row of people squeezed into each pew. The voice of a priest chanting prayers came from the chapel in which the white Host shone above the sepulchre of the Lord. And the priest came forth with his ministers, bearing the Host in a silver monstrance. Then went up from the multitude in the church the triumphal shout of the hymn of the Resurrection. They sang like men and women who would storm the shining gates of heaven. And it seemed to me that their celebration of the Saviour's victory over death was also a prayer. They praised the Almighty for the Resurrection

of His Son and they prayed for the Resurrection of their country. And their prayer is heard. Poland has been crucified and has lain in the tomb of forgetfulness. The divine summons sounds above the din of battle: "Come forth."

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